

**“UN-RETIRING A GRANDMA”: GENDER AND AGE IN NEWS MEDIA  
REPRESENTATION DURING THE 2015 SPANISH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

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Master's thesis

University of Helsinki

Department of Social Research

Media and Communication Studies

October 2018



Tiedekunta/Osasto Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos/Institution– Department Department of Social Research	
Tekijä/Författare – Author Esther Isabel Veas Pérez de Tudela Rodríguez			
Työn nimi / Arbetets titel – Title "Un-retiring a grandma": Gender and Age in News Media Representation During the 2015 Spanish Municipal Elections			
Oppiaine /Läroämne – Subject Media and Global Communication			
Työn laji/Arbetets art – Level Master's Thesis		Aika/Datum – Month and year October 2018	Sivumäärä/ Sidoantal – Number of pages 95
Tiivistelmä/Referat – Abstract  This master's thesis sought to fill in two gaps: the lack of studies of gendered media representation of women politicians in Spain, and the way older women politicians are represented in the media. The 2015 Spanish municipal elections provided the perfect ground to study these two phenomena, as Manuela Carmena, who was 71 years old at the time, was elected mayor of Madrid, the capital of Spain. This paper dealt with a corpus of 183 newspaper articles in total, belonging to the two most read newspapers in Spain, <i>El País</i> and <i>El Mundo</i> , which mentioned Manuela Carmena in some capacity. Through a mixed methodology consisting of Qualitative Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, the articles were analysed through a feminist prism. Manuela Carmena's mediated representation was shown to draw heavily from gendered tropes usually ascribed to women politicians, and a discourse of grandmotherhood underlined the way her image was constructed. However, there were some instances where Carmena was represented with more typically masculine traits, such as power or assertiveness, signifying perhaps a small improvement in the representation of women politicians.			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords Politics, representation, women politicians, Spain, municipal politics			
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited			
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information			

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, I would like to thank Dr Marko Ampuja and Tuula Lehtonen for your initial comments on the first drafts of this thesis, which helped steer it in the right direction. Thanks also to my supervisor Dr Mervi Pantti for your patience and invaluable feedback, and for ultimately motivating me to complete this piece of work. I thank my fellow classmates Emilee Jackson, Tia Oja, and Mariia Kukkakorpi for their comments and stimulating discussions while the thesis was starting to take shape.

I would also like to thank my parents for letting me carve my own path in my university studies, and for being incredibly supportive despite the 3000 km between us. Thanks also to my brother for showing me that life goes on after completing a large academic paper. I am indebted to Anna, Kim, Son, Annu, and Shaun for your boundless encouragement in times of need. I am especially grateful to Heidi Tukiainen and Timo Smura for your support as I learned to combine my academic endeavours with the first steps of my professional career.

Special thanks to Allison Rivers for reading over my manuscript and for your extremely insightful comments and corrections. And Antti: thank you ever so much for keeping our ship afloat during the past year and a half.

Helsinki, October 2018  
Esther Veas

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Across the globe, politics is and has been traditionally considered a male-dominated territory. Historically, most positions have been occupied by men at all levels of political office. This trend is slowly but surely being reversed, but entering politics as a woman is still more challenging than doing so as a man: the phrase ‘the higher the office, the thinner the air’ (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 62) arguably still rings true. As this thesis will attempt to demonstrate, this political background results in gendered political representation: this is the understanding that women politicians are treated differently in the media on the basis of their gender. Women are also expected to prove they are competent enough to do the job, while men are generally assumed to be ‘naturally prepared’ (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 66).

This study aims to fill in a gap in the literature identified by Adcock (2010): the role played by the media appears to be absent in a great deal of scholarship regarding female representation in politics—a representation that could contribute to and ultimately benefit ‘women’s symbolic and substantive political and cultural representation’ (Adcock 2010: 136, 152). Furthermore, the relationship between politics, the media and gender is an important study area which has not been extensively studied within the Spanish academic context (Fernández García 2012: 565).

The purpose of this thesis is to track the representation of Manuela Carmena during the 2015 municipal elections in Madrid, Spain. Carmena is a unique subject due to several reasons: at 71-years-old at the time of running for mayor, she was the oldest candidate amongst her cohort. She was a lawyer and then a judge until 2010, when she retired from the judiciary. Shortly afterwards, she set up a business selling shoes and clothes sewn by inmates of Madrid-based prisons. Additionally, her party, *Ahora Madrid*, was founded purely for the sake of these elections. I am interested to find out whether Carmena as a newcomer in politics, though already somewhat known for her previous career, was represented in the same fashion as female politicians with a longstanding political career. Therefore, the main research question guiding this paper is: “In light of her age and gender, how was Manuela Carmena represented in Spanish newspapers

before, during, and immediately after the 2015 municipal elections?” In order to gain a deeper understanding of her representation across 183 articles published in the *El Mundo* and *El País* newspapers, I will also be asking how she was represented in terms of her age, gender, and regarding her experience and qualifications. The underlying principle across the study is that of uncovering power relations at play when representing Carmena within the texts examined.

Investigating the way in which older politicians are represented in the media is a timely issue. The world’s population is increasingly aging, and this trend is projected to continue during the coming years: a quarter of the European population is already aged over 60 years; this trend is forecast to reach 35% in 2050 (United Nations 2017: 13). Thus, this continuing phenomenon may mean that older candidates can be increasingly present in the political arena. Additionally, part of my analysis will also focus on questions of age, gender and their intersection. These questions have seldom been explored specifically regarding women in the political arena, with a few counted exceptions such as US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton or Finnish ex-president Tarja Halonen.

This thesis contributes to the research area considering Spanish women politicians’ representation in the media, especially during times of intensive communication like election campaigns, but not only limited to them. Throughout this research, I aim to critically interrogate Carmena’s mediated representation. This will be done by unpacking the tropes and discourses related to the way women politicians are represented, as well as considering whether the stereotypes found in the literature are perpetuated or challenged in this particular politician’s case. A better, fairer representation of women politicians is one of many steps to take towards the improvement of democratic systems (Fernández García 2012: 578). In this thesis, the term *woman politician* will take preference over *female politician*, as the latter may risk being too dependent on a binary understanding of gender. However, the political arena is very much still constructed in this binary way and, as such, the scholarship on the topic also follows this pattern.

Political mobilisation occurs primarily through the media. Some argue that politics is no longer an autonomous process, but has instead become dependent on and constantly shaped by mass media (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999: 250). Therefore, this is an argument that takes issue with a hypothetically decreasing quality of democratic political discourse, in an environment where politics are increasingly ‘packaged’ for consumption:

Political arguments are trivialized; appearances take precedence over reality, personalities count for more than policies, the superficial matters more than the substantive. (Street 2011: 235)

Thus, the importance of this area of research lies in the fact that, nowadays, most voters receive political information through the media—it is rare to attend political meetings and meet politicians in person (O’Neill, Savigny, and Cann 2016: 295). Turning to the media is extremely relevant when studying the political representation of women, if we also assume that the media goes beyond merely reflecting the world and is able to construct narratives and determine the ways in which the public will think about the social world (Street 2011: 49, Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 214). In this way, this thesis will not focus on comparing male and female coverage, but rather on how a particular woman politician is portrayed in the media and the power relations at play.

The media exercise a gatekeeping role, ‘determining what issues are important’, as opposed to dictating what values and beliefs the public should possess (Ross 2002: 123). I would argue nevertheless that these two roles are deeply interrelated, as bringing “important” issues to the fore suggests which underlying values should be supported. Braden (1996: 2-3) describes this metaphorically as a ‘camera with a telephoto lens’, with the ability to zoom into specific issues and bring them to the surface, which may however not fit the frame in their entirety. Furthermore, there are conscious editorial decisions behind which stories to focus on, or what images will accompany certain articles (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 214). The media carefully choose which stories to cover, and this results in ‘reinscrib[ing] social problems, news stories, and individuals themselves within legitimated media discourses’ (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 424). As a whole, this may have an impact not only on the way female



politicians are perceived by the voters, but also on women's perceptions and choices to pursue a political career overall (O'Neill et al. 2016: 295).

This master's thesis will be structured as follows: Chapter 2 will set the scene within Spanish politics and their context, paying special attention to the position of women within municipal politics. In Chapter 3, a review of the literature is provided, focusing on critical feminism, representation of women politicians in the media, and the phenomena of the personalisation of politics and celebrity politics. In Chapter 4, the methodology for my research will be outlined, and the triangulation between Qualitative Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis as methods of analysis will be explored and justified. Chapter 5 will provide the analysis results and discuss their wider implications. Finally, in Chapter 6 all of these themes are brought together to conclude the thesis, the limitations to this work are acknowledged, and I provide some recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 2: Contextualisation of Spanish politics**

This chapter aims to give a brief overview of the Spanish context within which this thesis is situated, in order to better gauge its political and social significance. Firstly, I will introduce the recent history of Spanish politics as a means of establishing the political context within which this thesis will sit. This context chapter will provide an overview that focuses mostly on General Elections. Since these elections affect politics and constituents country-wide, and they are the most documented in historical literature, their political impact is the broadest and most generalizable. Because Spain is politically fragmented into 17 Autonomous Regions and my thesis will deal with municipal politics, an even smaller political structure, I consider General Elections to be the best means of providing a concise general context to understand the key dynamics at play within Spanish politics. Secondly, I will turn to consider women's position in the Spanish political arena, both at a general level and in municipal politics.

### **2.1 Outline of Spain's recent democratic history at an executive governmental level**

The purpose of this section is to briefly outline the political situation in Spain, starting from the Transition between a dictatorship and a democratic system. This is in order to provide the reader with the necessary context to understand the relevance of Manuela Carmena's political success. It must be noted, however, that the arena of municipal politics may present differences to that of a presidential race; nevertheless, most academic literature focuses on politics at a national level and, as stated above, I argue it is appropriate to provide a general idea of the political climate in Spain.

At just over 40 years, the current Spanish democratic institution is fairly young. During this time, the two main parties in Spain have taken turns at governing the country, resulting in power being almost equally shared between them over the last four decades. The trend is only starting to be reversed now, albeit most noticeably at the level of municipal politics, as this thesis will illustrate in greater detail.

When General Francisco Franco, the authoritarian leader of Spain since the end of the Civil War in 1939, died in 1975, he personally designated Juan Carlos de Borbón as King and Chief of State. King Juan Carlos replaced Franco's last Prime Minister with Adolfo Suárez in 1976, and Suárez promised elections would be held within a year. Spain's first Parliamentary elections since the beginning of the Civil War in 1936 were held on June 15, 1977 (Costada 2009: 4), and Suárez was elected, although the election results 'did show a broad left-right division', mirroring Spain's historic divide in the political spectrum (Vincent 2007: 213).

*La Transición*, a period of transition towards a democratic state, began upon Suárez's election. It was a time characterised by 'moderation, rational discussion, and control' as symbols of democracy (Vincent 2007: 214). It was during this period, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1978, that Spain's Constitution was proclaimed. After this, Suárez's party (*Unión del Centro Democrático*) dissolved. Since then, the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, known by its acronym PSOE) and the more conservative Popular Party (*Partido Popular*; PP) have alternated in central government. The PSOE was in office for 14 years, with Felipe González at the helm until 1996. At that point, José María Aznar of the *Partido Popular* won the election and held office as Prime Minister for eight years. In 2004, PSOE enjoyed another nearly eight-year-long stint in government under José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, followed once again by Mariano Rajoy, leader of the PP, in November 2011. Rajoy won the 2011 General Elections with an absolute majority in Parliament (Bustelo 2016: 109).

However, the Popular Party's electoral win in 2011 came in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, which led to austerity measures with the aim of reactivating the Spanish economy. There were budget cuts in several areas, such as education and healthcare, which caused unrest among Spaniards. From a gender perspective, the reduction in funding for the welfare state disproportionately impacted the lives of Spanish women. It raised concerns amongst working-class women, as well as those belonging to the 'impoverished lower-middle class', as these budget cuts required women 'to assume almost all non-paid care and domestic work' (Palomo 2016: 925). It was this general

sense of pressure and unease that provided the context within which the *Indignados*<sup>1</sup> protests, also known as the 15-M movement, sparked on 15 May 2011. This citizen-led movement sought to provide basic human rights with a key role in Spain's political agenda (Gámez Fuentes 2015: 359-360), and it aimed to do so by means of direct democracy, without any hierarchical organisational structures, as well as by avoiding to identify with any political ideology.

Spain's recent political history can therefore be briefly summarised in a two-party battle until the *Indignados* movement, which highlighted existing tensions in the political system. This movement also favoured the creation of new left-wing, citizen-based parties like *Podemos*<sup>2</sup> as well as their offshoots *Ahora Madrid* or *Barcelona En Comú*<sup>3</sup>. *Podemos* capitalised on the societal discomfort at the time in their bid to provide a radical alternative to the current political climate (Meyenberg 2017: 225). This marked the beginning of a change away from the two-party system: already in the 2014 European parliament elections, *Podemos* surprisingly obtained five seats and was the fourth most voted party despite having registered just two months beforehand (Pardo Torregrosa 2014). The 2015 municipal elections, which took place only one year later, confirmed Spaniards' willingness to vote for other parties other than the PP or the PSOE, as exemplified by Ada Colau and Manuela Carmena becoming mayors of Barcelona and Madrid respectively as leaders of citizen-led initiatives heavily supported by *Podemos*.

Spain's traditional two-party system continued to show weakness during and after the 2015 General Elections in December. There was a period of political blockage as the PP won the elections once again, but this time without enough support to obtain a majority. The elections were repeated in June 2016 with the same result, although the Popular Party managed to obtain the support of centre-right party *Ciudadanos*<sup>4</sup> in Congress and Rajoy (PP) was once again sworn in. Despite these close battles, a watered-down

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<sup>1</sup> literally translated as "the outraged"

<sup>2</sup> literally translated as "we can"

<sup>3</sup> "Barcelona in Common"

<sup>4</sup> literally "Citizens"

version of the two-party trend has continued even in June 2018, after Rajoy faced a vote of no-confidence following a corruption scandal in his party. PSOE's Pedro Sánchez was sworn in then, but not without the crucial support of *Podemos* and some small regional parties.

## **2.2 The place of women in Spanish political history**

This section will look at the ways in which women are represented in Spanish politics, especially as political representatives. The purpose of this subchapter is to add to the general picture of politics in Spain in order to situate the importance of the 2015 municipal elections.

In terms of political representation, the Spanish efforts to increase women's presence in the political arena are exemplified by the *Ley Orgánica 3/2007*, a constitutional law passed on March 22 of that year, which made it compulsory for parties to present closed, unchangeable candidate lists, with a neutral gender composition: this means that no gender's political representation can be smaller than 40% or larger than 60% of the list (Espí-Hernández 2017: 136). The effect of this can be seen in the current gender make-up of the Spanish Congress or Lower House, which boasted 40.6% women in the last quarter of 2017. This places Spain fourth amongst the 28 EU countries in terms of women's political representation in this executive organ of government (European Institute for Gender Equality 2018a). The current Spanish minister cabinet enjoys a 65% female presence, which is unprecedented both in the country and at an international level (Claveria 2018).

Municipal politics is an area that has not received as much scholarly attention as national or regional politics (Batista Medina 2015: 5), and much less so in terms of gender studies. Furthermore, while there is an assumption that women face fewer barriers in accessing municipal politics as opposed to higher levels of government, some research suggests that the municipal level of politics is not 'barrier-free', and women face an 'uphill climb' towards achieving gender parity, no matter what level of government is being studied (Tolley 2011: 588). Furthermore, there is no evidence at the moment to support the

hypothesis that this increase in women's presence in municipal politics is affecting political output in terms of gender and gender equality: much to the contrary, female political leadership has 'barely consolidated' itself and as such, its impact in the political realm is far from being a transformative force in terms of gender structures (Larrinaga Renteria, Amurrio Velez, and Mateos González 2012: 346).

The 2015 municipal elections were chosen for this study due to several reasons. Firstly, they took place during a key moment in Spanish politics, where the traditional two-party system started to show some weakness for the first time. Additionally, 2015 was the first time in Spain's current democracy where women politicians exceeded 35% of all councillorship posts across Spain, although this is only a 5% increase since 2007 (Espí-Hernández 2017: 137). Thus, this makes the 2015 municipal elections a historical cycle not only regarding the breakdown of the two-party system, but also as a breakthrough in women's representation in politics.

As mentioned earlier, municipal politics is an area which is rarely closely studied, despite its great impact on the daily lives of citizens in any given country. The second reason for choosing these elections as a case study is that two women became mayors of Spain's major cities: Madrid and Barcelona. Usually, it is smaller city councils which see women politicians in higher, more powerful positions such as deputy mayor (Batista Medina 2015: 10-11). However, even despite the continuous increase in female representation in the realm of municipal politics, the highest office is still reserved primarily for men. In fact, Espí-Hernández (2017: 147) argues that the highest local office, that of mayor, is still heavily *masculinised*. In the last quarter of 2017, 19.1% of all Spanish mayors were women. This is nevertheless some 5% higher than the average in the EU (European Institute for Gender Equality 2018b).

The 2015 municipal elections were the first time that a woman politician was elected to be mayor of Madrid. However, this was not the first time a woman held the position. In 2011, Ana Botella became the first woman to occupy the post of mayor of the city, although she was not elected: instead, Alberto Gallardón's appointment as Minister of Defence promoted her to the highest echelon of the Madrid City Council. This adds to

the significance of the 2015 municipal elections, which featured three women running for mayor in three electorally successful parties (namely Esperanza Aguirre for the Popular Party, Manuela Carmena for *Ahora Madrid*, and Begoña Villacís for *Ciudadanos*).

The newspaper articles that will be analysed in this thesis deal with Manuela Carmena's campaign and first days in power. After the elections, however, there was no clear majority, and it was only upon a pact with the PSOE that Carmena was able to begin her tenure as mayor of Madrid. In terms of controversy, her campaign was relatively uneventful; there were some accusations towards her husband which did not affect her standing as frontrunner. However, during her first days in power she was at the heart of a controversy affecting party member Guillermo Zapata, who was accused of anti-Semitism after publishing dark humour tweets prior to being elected as a councillor. This slightly affected Carmena's portrayal as we will see in Chapter 5.

### 2.3 Conclusion

Across this chapter, the context within which this research is situated has been laid out. Firstly, Spain's longstanding two-party political system, present since the beginning of the current democracy in 1975, was described as showing signs of weakness due to the creation of new parties like *Podemos* which rose to prominence in 2015. These parties aim to differentiate themselves from the elites by concentrating their efforts on the citizenry. The General Elections held afterwards have shown that Spaniards are now favouring other parties, and majority wins are no longer easy to obtain.

Women's roles in Spain as political agents have also been considered. Spain occupies a rather high position in terms of women politician's parliamentary and municipal representation when compared to the rest of the European Union; however, these figures are still not at the level of parity regarding men politicians; especially in the position of mayor, where a staggering 80% of men occupy this position to this day. The municipal elections which serve as context for this study were also explained to be crucial and unique for various reasons: in addition to the success of new parties, there was an exceptionally high female presence among the candidates in Madrid.

### Chapter 3: Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide background information on the representation of women politicians in political communication in general, and the media in particular. The chapter is structured along three main axes: critical feminism, the mediated representation of women politicians, and the media as a means of political communication. There has not been a great deal of research specifically concerning the topic of my thesis, that is, the interplay within a Spanish context of politics, gender, and the media (Fernández García 2012). In order to overcome this, some deal of side-stepping has been required, for instance, by exploring how this representation works in other countries. Furthermore, a lot of the literature concerning this area of research was published in the 1990s and may necessitate updates along the way as mediated communication evolves at an astonishing pace. Additionally, the literature review does not focus too much on the concepts of representation and discourse analysis as these topics will be dealt with more extensively in the methodology chapter.

#### 3.1 Constructing the woman: critical feminism as the lens of the study

This section aims to provide a brief description of feminist theory and its main tenets, particularly critical feminism and feminist linguistics, and discussing how they fit into the political arena where the representation of women politicians is concerned; the concepts of aging and its representation will also be touched upon.

##### 3.1.1 The multiplicity of *feminisms*

In its broadest sense, feminist theory aims to explore how women's lives are shaped and what it means to be a woman from a cultural standpoint (Jackson and Jones 1998: 1). Feminism is used almost as a blanket concept to describe a whole array of epistemologies, or ways of understanding the world. In fact, some scholars speak of *feminisms*, and not just one single theoretical posture. The reason is that feminism is a historically-constituted movement that applies to the local and the global as well as the social and the political (Dietz 2003: 399).



Feminism as an epistemology has been characterised by several key features: the drive for social justice, understanding power as both an organising device and a site of transformation, situating sex and gender at the centre of theoretical endeavours, and an interest in unpacking the culture-nature and public-private dichotomies, among others (Dhamoon 2013: 89). The subject posited by feminism is none other than women (Dietz 2003: 399). Feminist scholarship understands that this subject is objectified through gendered relations; an objectification that feminism then tries to highlight and overturn ‘in the name of specific principles (e.g., equality, rights, liberty, autonomy, dignity, self-realization, recognition, respect, justice, freedom)’ (Dietz 2003: 399). Thus, the overarching purpose of feminism is primarily an emancipatory one.

From a historical perspective, scholars speak of several waves, or periods, of feminism. First wave feminism has its roots in the 19th century, and it was focused on women’s rights in terms of dress, legal property, and voting or being able to participate in public affairs (McPherson 2000: 208). In the 1960s, second wave feminism, while building on this base, focused instead on ‘demand for greater sexual freedom for women’ which was not to be necessarily tied to conventional heterosexual relationships, as well as access to birth control, abortion, equal pay, and safety in terms of domestic abuse and rape (McPherson 2000: 209). These requirements were, however, not sufficiently in tune with issues of class or race. Therefore, third-wave feminism, which appeared in the 1990s, supported the idea that there is not one single kind of feminism, but, instead, ‘multiple feminist lenses wake us up to layers of sexist, racist, homophobic, and colonialist points of view’ (Hesse-Biber 2007: 4). One of the key features of third wave feminism was its ability to theorise about itself, which first and second wave feminism did not partake in (McHugh 2007: 145). It is this multiplicity of lenses that I consider to be important to my study as I explore the intersection of age and gender in the mediated political realm. Furthermore, some argue that we seem to be at the cusp of a transition into fourth wave feminism, facilitated by the Internet and the ‘call-out culture’ it has created, by allowing instances of sexism or misogyny to be challenged almost instantly. Critics of this view ponder whether this is enough to qualify as a new era, but it is clear that the Internet has helped create global networks of feminism (Munro 2013: 23).

### 3.1.2 Constructing the woman: critical feminism and the role of gender

As mentioned earlier, there is not just one understanding to feminist theory. Depending on their central area of concern, feminisms range from care-focused to ecofeminism, as well as psychoanalytic, Marxist, or socialist feminism. This wide range of epistemologies can be complicated to navigate: my thesis in particular will be focusing on feminist critical theory. This strand of feminist theory focuses on issues of identity and exclusion, as well as power and culture. To talk about power is to talk about control, in this case, of one group over another, both in regard to influencing their actions and their thoughts (van Dijk 1993: 254); patriarchy, which will be explained in more detail later on, acts as a very powerful organisational device. Feminist critical theory performs a kind of social criticism by considering variables such as ‘history and practice, culture and society, present needs and future emancipation’ (Fleming 2000: 110-111). In other words, feminist critical theory carefully situates the object in the moment of analysis. Emancipation is at the root of critical theory in that it aims to overturn ‘hierarchical relations of power’, and critical theorists see ‘freedom from oppression’ as key to their project (Gannon and Davies 2007: 77).

One of the main difficulties in undertaking a study where gender acquires such an important role is the precise definition of this concept. It is a term that may seem natural and obvious, hence the need to apply new or different perspectives to its study (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 2003: 9). The French existentialist writer Simone de Beauvoir valiantly stated in her seminal work *Le Deuxième Sexe* that one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one (de Beauvoir 1949), introducing the idea that femininity is constructed. Furthermore, feminist theorists argue that gender and sex are not synonyms, and perhaps not even antonyms in that they might not be understood as mutually exclusive either. Second-wave feminists considered gender as a ‘social construction and a product of nurturing’, and sex as a ‘fixed biological given and a product of nature’ (McHugh 2007: 48). This distinction at the level of social nurturing led feminist cultural theorists to suggest that women and men see the world in ‘fundamentally different ways’ due to their experiences (Sullivan 1993: 533). Further to

this, radical-libertarian and radical-cultural feminists do not agree with the patriarchal assumption that one's sex (male/female) and one's gender (masculine or feminine) are connected: this assumption is only intended to perpetuate gender roles so women will remain passive objects and men will be active subjects in society (Tong 2009: 51). Yet Judith Butler (1999) goes a step further and considers, for instance, that gender is not merely associated to specific roles or traits, but is instead performed: it is 'always a doing' (Butler 1999: 33). It is not expressed, but constituted by what are said to be its results: gender is not an attribute, but rather, what someone does. The importance of language lies in that it is a way through which gender can be 'enacted or constituted' (Ehrlich 2000: 288). Both of these understandings speak to a constructivist understanding of the social world, which will be the guiding theme underlying my research.

### 3.1.3 Mediated representation of aged women

A key point in feminist scholarship has to do with exposing and fighting oppression, which can be defined as 'the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice' (Deutsch 2006: 19). When referring to systematic oppression of women, the term patriarchy is used to highlight 'the systemisation of the oppression of women by social structures such as marriage, heterosexuality, laws, policies and even language' (McHugh 2007: 93). Doing away with the existence of a patriarchal system of oppression is one of the main principles of feminism. Oppression can be exercised on women through a myriad of social factors, such as gender, class, race, and even age.

Like gender, age and ageing are fluid concepts. While the media tends to focus solely on chronological age, it is dangerous to consider it as a sole marker of ageism and, in turn, oppression: '[o]ne older person can be privileged, visible, and have a voice in public debate, whereas another may never be seen or heard in the media' (Edström 2018: 78). It is therefore important to consider these cases intersectionally: the social construction of aging is not only based on chronological years, but also encompassing 'biological, psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual processes, as well as cultural, ethnic, and gender differences' (Cohen 2002: 600).

Nevertheless, it appears that feminist scholarship does not pay enough attention to age-based oppression: only recently has the concept of aging from a feminist perspective received much scholarly attention: Pearsall (1997) noted in the late 90s that aging had been overlooked by contemporary feminists. Nowadays, aging and age-based oppression may be mentioned, but treated ‘as a given—an “et cetera” on a list of oppressions, as if to indicate that we already know what [they are]’ (Calasanti and Slevin 2016: 1). Discourses in relation to the body should recognise it as a social text: its meaning is formed, given meaning and ‘fashioned within and by culture’, making age and aging ‘deeply social’ concepts (Twigg 2004: 60, 70). From this constructivist perspective, an old woman becomes old ‘simply by having projected onto her younger women’s culturally shaped notions of what old is’ (Cruikshank 2009: 154).

The way in which old women are portrayed in the media affects not only the way they are perceived by others, such as those who may have little to no contact with elderly people, but also the way they perceive themselves (Vasil and Wass 1993: 72). As for their representation, women in later life have tended to be negatively stereotyped in popular writings and in the media (Pearsall 1997: 1): ‘the aging experience is not gender-neutral’ (Cohen 2002: 600). The way older women are represented is subject to a double marginalization by age and gender (Lemish and Muhlbauer 2012: 167, Nelson 2016: 194.) In this way, Edström (2018: 79) states that the majority of mainstream media ‘seem to signal that ageing and older people, especially women, are not newsworthy, interesting, or desirable’. This is supported by the claim that, as a society, the collective imaginary conceives older women in a generally stereotypical fashion, as demonstrated by Henneberg (2010) in her study of the representation of grandmothers in classic children’s literature. These representational instances only account for three distinct stereotypes: ‘the wicked old witch, the selfless godmother, or the demented hag’ (Henneberg 2010: 128). Additionally, these grandmothers do not possess much power or agency to alter the course of the plot. The way older women are represented also continues to fall into similarly recognisable patterns in popular culture and the media, according to Lemish and Muhlbauer (2012): the patterns of invisibility,

stereotypization, ghettoization or representation of an all-minority group of old women, and integration are all present simultaneously in today's media landscape.

However, in recent years, we are seeing a cultural shift turning towards an increased visibility of ageing women in contemporary media in the form of celebrities (Marshall and Rahman 2015: 577). Nowadays the media carries a fair share of images of older women spearheading large fashion or makeup advertising campaigns; this may seem initially like a step forward but, ultimately, the intended target audiences are likely to be demographics other than their own, therefore acting towards otherwise marginalising and othering older women:

[t]he question remains, then, is it really now “cool” to be an older woman?—or cool to be a young person who declares she admires older women?—in which case, do older women remain somehow “Other”? (Jermyn 2016: 586)

And in the terrain of women in politics; are older woman candidates being chosen because they are suited for the job or because they will be a superficial asset to the campaign – or a little bit of both?

### **3.2 Mediated representation of women politicians**

This section deals with the way women are represented in the media, focusing especially on women's representation in the arena of politics. It begins with an exploration of the layers which apply to women politician's mediated representation, such as their *lack* of presence, the linguistic conventions employed, or the attention paid to their bodies. This examination then moves towards the stereotypes present in women politician's representation in the media. This study is carried out mainly at a general level, but some country-specific insights are provided as a means to provide examples and strengthen the key arguments presented.

### 3.2.1 Layers of representation of women politicians

Gómez-Escalonilla, García, Santín, Rodríguez, and Torregrosa (2008: 69) suggest that women are less represented in the media (only one out of six leaders represented are female) because female politicians are not present in day-today politics. Yet the number of woman politicians is growing—represented by increasingly more women presidents, Prime Ministers, national parliaments and even local councils. For instance, in the past decade, the highest office has been executed by women in Finland, New Zealand, Argentina, Iceland, Brazil or Germany. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean equality is on the rise. Political office is still said to be ‘stratified by gender’ on two counts: concerning how woman politicians are portrayed, but also related to their persistent under-representation in politics (Krook and Childs 2010: 3). The concept of representation, however, is twofold: being socially delegated and entitled to speak politically for others, and mediated presentation through word and image combined (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 105; Murdock 1999: 13).

Women’s presence in politics as an area of discussion has existed since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but a key difference is the highly mediatised context within which political activity takes place nowadays. In this way, increased mediation aids in the construction of discourses and a general shared interpretation of women’s roles in society, implicitly providing an understanding of accepted models of femininity and masculinity or outlining the ideals that women should ascribe to (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 422-423). These models are easily spread through the media, reaching far more people than ever before. However, the media are not a mere channel, but they are also implicated as gatekeepers and reproducers of information. In this vein, the way in which the term ‘woman’ is constructed has implications as to how women politicians are meant to act, and the way these discourses shift affects how women politicians choose to present themselves as well as how they are perceived; unpacking this category can help expose or challenge societal power relations. In the case of feminist political communication, the media aid in the representation and reconstruction of ‘the contrast between femininity and politics, in popular culture as well as in serious political reporting’ (Sreberny and van Zoonen 2000: 2).

Language is not a neutral or transparent way of representing the world. It is rather ‘inextricably implicated in the socio-political systems and institutions in which it functions’ (Ehrlich 2000: 287). Therefore, language’s androcentric orientation also plays an important role in the constructing the way in which women politicians are represented in the media. This is because it ‘reflects the masculine paradigm in contemporary society’, a characteristic that is even more prominent in gender-marked languages, such as romance languages (Sensales, Areni, and Dal Secco 2016: 459). Romance languages, such as Spanish, use the masculine generic to refer to the population as a whole. This supports ‘male-biased imagery’ (Mucchi-Faina 2005: 208), which encourages those who speak these languages to assume male presence as a given in this context, as well as ascribing more masculine traits to those occupying political positions. Therefore, analysing linguistic devices is also of paramount importance to uncover stereotypes, sexism, and power imbalances emanating from the discourses employed. As a result, the societies in which we live are of predominantly masculine, and women are constructed as the Other. This feature is exacerbated in traditionally male-dominated arenas, such as that of politics. Acknowledging the gendered nature of language is key to making the necessary societal changes so that equality for women does not mean ‘having to continue to fit into a world alien to themselves’ (Arneil 1999: 4), or a world that is constructed purely in masculine terms, but rather enjoy an inclusive language of gender equality.

In terms of image and language, mediated politics are heavily gendered, ‘supporting male as norm and regarding women politicians as novelties’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 114). In this way, from the point of view of feminist theory, the news media favour ‘the dominant socioeconomic paradigm of capitalist patriarchy’, which works towards facilitating a global system which is ‘male-ordered’ and, as such, free to situate women in gendered contexts and roles (Ross 2002: 79) by normalising and legitimising their attributes and behaviours (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 424) as they please. General discourses on gender and the way women in politics are framed are said to be one of several dimensions of male dominance in politics (Dahlerup and Leyenaar 2013: 8). This is strengthened through gendered mediation, a term coined by Sreberny

and Ross (1996): through this notion, it is understood that ‘conventional news frames treat the male as normative’ (Gidengil and Everitt 2003) in a strategic fashion.

Gendered mediation, however, ‘does not assume that the gendered framing of women politicians will necessarily be sex-stereotypical or negative’, but instead highlights the different frames projected onto politicians dependent on their gender (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 425).

Women are not only represented according to their political characteristics or policy suggestions, but their bodies also play an important role. As Ross and Sreberny assert, ‘it is women’s bodies, not women’s minds, that fascinate the boys’ (2000: 88): women politicians are objectified and presented as subjects to cater to the overwhelmingly male gaze in today’s society. The ‘male gaze’ was a term coined by Laura Mulvey (1999) in her seminal essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”. Originating from the perspective of film studies, the male gaze describes the man as the ‘bearer of the look’, and the woman as the image to be merely looked at, playing into an active/passive dichotomy. This gaze is qualified by Arya (2012: 196) as no longer being normatively “male”, due to the increasing number of female agents in the field such as directors or protagonists, although politics still remains a male-dominated environment. Nevertheless, what Ross (2002) suggests is that, following from a trend of commodification of women’s bodies in society, for instance as part of advertising campaigns or in television shows, women politicians’ bodies are objectified in this sexist manner (Ross 2002: 93). However, Manning and Short Thompson (2009: 264) would disagree with the existence of a single gaze, for they believe that there is no one simple reading of the body. These readings are instead ‘polysemic’, that is, they possess a variety of meanings, in that they stand in relation to others’ experiences, which ultimately constitute readings of gendered political rhetoric.

### 3.2.2 The stereotypical mediated representation of women politicians

Generally speaking, the manner in which women candidates are portrayed in news media is very similar to the way in which women’s issues as a whole are represented: namely, as topics which are not legitimate of media interest (Ross 2002: 151). What is



more, both the images and the language used to describe women are ‘very different’ to those depicting or describing men (Sreberny and Ross 1996: 112). These representations are rife with stereotypes and usually focusing on the frames of ‘male-political-public vs. female-personal-private’, which represent conventional practice yet remain deeply exclusionary (Ross 2002: 163). This line of discourse furthers the opposition between women and politics by establishing that the political realm is not a place for women, and that women’s traditional activities belong to the personal sphere and thus have nothing to do with politics either (Sreberny and van Zoonen 2000: 2). In this way, a dichotomy is established: while men are portrayed and considered as ‘strong, aggressive, rational, active, self-confident and assertive’, women are expected to be ‘emotional, warm, compassionate, gentle and cautious’: these assumptions extend to the assumed competence of men and women in politics; men are expected to perform well in hard politics, or ‘foreign politics, security, the military and the economy’, while women do better in soft politics, or ‘social welfare, health, education, the environment’. (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 63; cf. Pušnik and Bulc 2001; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993.)

Lee (2004: 222) claims that exploring positive portrayals of women politicians can ‘sensitize us to the relation between the gender problems specific to the field of politics and the gender problems pertaining to the larger society’, as well as ‘alert us to how the ‘game’ of gender in the political arena is structured. This research, however, was carried out in Hong Kong, which the author describes as an environment which is highly positive towards female politicians. Lee (2004: 222) also suggests that ‘positive media portrayal often results from the women politicians’ ability to play by the rules of the game’, that is, aiding in the illustration of what is expected of women politicians not only at the media but also societal level. Regarding this assumption, Lee (2004) fails to consider that ‘playing by the rules of the game’ may involve adopting a more typically masculine attitude. Additionally, while news coverage of women politicians may not always appear as overtly sexist or gendered, ‘subtle discrimination persists’, in the form of a bias which is not as easy to uncover and eradicate (Braden 1996: 1)—a positive representation of women politicians may still play to the interests of a patriarchally dominated news system.

Gender stereotypes are also an impediment to fair and equal representation in mediated politics. They are ‘extrapolated from the private domain of women’s experiences to public issues and concerns’ (Ross 2002: 129), and they are damaging to women (Gómez-Escalonilla et al. 2008: 59). Gender stereotypes do not solely draw on clichéd tropes: juxtaposing ‘stereotypically masculine imagery’ serves to underline the idea that women do not belong in politics (Gidengil and Everitt 2003: 211). As such, and drawing from their perception as novelties or ‘norm breakers’ in politics, women politicians may be represented in a way that highlights their ‘deviant characteristics’, primarily that of being women in a typically male-dominated space (Meeks 2012: 178). Perhaps as a countermeasure, and as Kahn’s (1996) research shows, women employ “masculine” strategies themselves, reclaiming this masculinised imagery to portray themselves as strong candidates.

Gendered metaphors of power are not merely stylistic devices, but instead ‘foundational to the making and our understanding of political identities and realities’ (Lim 2009: 258) as arenas in which power and dominance of one gender over the other are repeatedly expressed. Furthermore, the world of politics draws on a private/public dichotomy: the fact that politics exist in the public realm is inherent to the existence of a private realm. Closely linked to this dualism, Western political thought has tended to identify men with the world of ‘reason, order, culture, and public life’, while women have been linked to the world of ‘nature, emotion, desires and private life’ (Arneil 1999: 7). Therefore, women who are present in the political arena may tend to emphasise aspects of their image which reinforce the idea that the ‘private sphere and the sphere of personal relations are the natural spheres of women’ (Pušnik and Bulc 2001: 401). As a result, femininity and the strive for power are not seen as compatible (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 73) and may be even be constructed ‘as each other’s antithesis’ (Sreberny and van Zoonen 2000: 1), which does not benefit a fair representation of women in politics.

Other scholars, however, do not place such a strong emphasis on the gendered dichotomy of political thought. Manning and Short-Thompson (2009: 261) argue that as gender continues to ‘become more diverse and less defined as women play more prominent roles in political systems, men continue to embrace new forms of political

rhetoric that some would consider feminized', which results in the development of 'tolerant and affirmative attitudes regarding sexualities and gender identities' and the creation of a wide array gender representations in the mass media. Women and men do not occupy the same spaces in the political realm, but they are able to 'incorporate both feminine and masculine aspects into their gendered identity' (Meeks 2012: 177), or pursuing an 'integrated' model consisting of a masculine and feminine dimension where communicative elements pertaining to each gender are used depending on the situation (Grebelsky-Lichtman 2017: 290). Yet this is a rather optimistic view, and does not really consider the implications of men adopting "feminine" techniques versus, for instance, women using "masculine" techniques. Using masculine techniques tends to have a more negative effect on women's campaigning and communication, presumably because the political arena is a space of power traditionally dominated by the male (Gómez-Escalonilla et al. 2008: 59). Certain male politicians, such as Silvio Berlusconi, are known to use 'both femininity and masculinity to their advantage' (Ahrens 2009: 5), positioning themselves as strong leaders but still appealing to voters' emotions. This, however, does not imply a feminist usage of metaphors in political communication. Quite the contrary, the cleavage between women and men is intensified by purposefully adopting the "other" gender's role.

This is a set of contrasting perspectives that ultimately leads to a 'double bind' (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 63): women presenting themselves as excessively "masculine", or aiming to portray characteristics more typical of male politicians, may face rejection; yet portraying themselves as excessively feminine is not likely to help their candidacies either. The strategy of 'highlighting their toughness' may in fact be counterproductive if the media frames their behaviour as 'counter-stereotypical' (Gidengil and Everitt 2003: 209), in a position diametrically opposed to the private sphere or caring features women are expected to inhabit. This reinforces the aforementioned observations that the way in which women politicians are portrayed draws from a male/female dichotomy in which certain traits are assigned to either gender (Ross 2002; Sreberny and Van Zoonen 2000).

As Van Zoonen's analysis of Angela Merkel and Tarja Halonen's political websites shows, female leaders and politicians are constructed as 'others' not only vis-à-vis

dominant images of femininity, but also due to their minority position as women at the highest echelons of the political world (van Zoonen 2006: 298). Historically, women leaders such as Margaret Thatcher or Queen Elizabeth I were perceived as ‘domineering, arrogant and cold’ – they are known to be strong leaders, but their femininity and likeability suffered in what Lim (2009) refers to as the ‘Unruly Woman’. On the other hand, a woman that does not overtly adopt masculine traits or ‘embraces her femininity as a Madonna or Beauty Queen’ is more likely to be perceived as vulnerable, but also ‘less threatening’ and, as such, more likeable (Lim 2009: 255). As Members of Parliament, in a British context, women politicians in the 1990s believed that the way they look attracts more media attention than their male colleagues’ looks. The interviewed women reported that the media ‘always includes the age of women politicians, what they look like, their domestic and family circumstances, their fashion sense and so on...’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 110). This study, however, was based on these politicians’ own perceptions and only 28 out of 63 woman MPs took part.

The research done concerning gender in the Spanish news mediascape appears to agree upon the fact that it is widely male-dominated. For instance, in daily newspapers, not only are men generally more present than women, but this presence is exercised through more dominant or powerful roles like soldiers, athletes, or businessmen (Matud, Rodríguez, and Espinosa 2011). Additionally, online newspapers also tend to perpetuate gender inequality. Women only add up to 18% of those individuals appearing in these newspapers’ stories, and when they do, they are associated with ‘feminine and soft topics’ such as art, social commitment, or leisure activities (Mateos de Cabo, Gimeno, Martínez and López 2014: 67). And this is present not only through the written word, but also via the visual representation of women: there are very few women as subjects in the photographs used to illustrate articles in *El País* and *El Mundo*. The range of women represented is also limited in terms of the age of those represented, and usually linked to soft news such as culture or social aspects (Marín and Ganzabal 2011: 65).

In the political realm, similar findings have been reported. Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen (2012) do not spend a great deal of time uncovering the implications of

power in the discursive construction of women politicians, yet theirs is one of the few studies which explicitly focuses on the Spanish context, although the general focus is European. In a similar fashion to other scholarship in this context, their study concludes that the press does play a part in the unequal treatment of woman politicians, publishing stories ‘focusing on women’s physical appearance and celebrating traditional gender roles, reinforcing the construction of women politicians as falling outside of the norm’ (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 437). Therefore, women are not discursively constructed as merely politicians, but their suitability to the post is assessed depending on their education, previous experience, and their political performance. Interestingly, in this case their findings were not consistent with previous research such as Ross (2002), in that the reference to women politicians’ appearance was present, but not given as much importance. In terms of the photographs used, women politicians are quite visible in both major Spanish newspapers, especially at the municipal level, where there is a higher level of equal representation. However, women are rarely represented by themselves, but instead their team or male colleagues are also frequently featured, which often displaces them to a less relevant position (Marín and Ganzabal 2011: 66). In an analysis carried out in the Basque Country, some important findings included the fact that women are named in a less objective manner in the article headings, leaning instead towards incomplete formulations of their given names or even pseudonyms and aliases (Berasategi Zeberio 2012: 36). On the other hand, Gómez-Escalonilla et al. (2008), who also focus on the Spanish context, highlight that women are barely represented overall because of their absence from the general political context. Furthermore, sometimes the fact that women are not represented acquires significant in itself: Berasategi Zeberio’s (2012: 36) analysis of the daily press in Gipuzkoa showed that women are excluded from the title of a piece of news more often than men.

### **3.3 Celebrity and the personalisation of politics**

The final section of this literature review explores the increasing personalisation of politics in the media through the prism of celebrity politics.

In today's media landscape, politicians' personalities are regarded as important factors that may take precedence over their particular policy suggestions (Street 2011). Their personas may draw on elements from popular culture, with the aim of being associated with these or appear more relatable to the constituents. The popularisation and personalisation of politics that result from these choices are not a new phenomenon in politics, as history is dotted with charismatic political leaders. However, these trends are favoured and encouraged thanks to the world we live in, where forms of entertainment, as well as the Internet, proliferate (van Zoonen 2006: 288).

A useful body of scholarship to apply in order to further explore this phenomenon of personalisation is that of celebrity politics. Due to the mediated ecosystem in which we live, this phenomenon, considered by van Zoonen and Harmer (2011) as a 'simple fact of political life that needs to be accepted' (2011: 94). As a concept, celebrity occurs when media appearance intersects with the 'real lives of performers' (van Zoonen 2006: 289). In this sense, the term "celebrity" is taken to refer to 'those people who, via mass media, enjoy 'a greater presence and wider scope of activity ... and agency than are those who make up the rest of the population' (Street 2011: 244-245). In terms of gender, female celebrity 'is articulated primarily with the codes and conventions of media representations of women', these conventions initially followed Hollywood and its sexualised tropes, but are now largely focused on television, pop music and advertising images (van Zoonen 2006: 289).

Street argues that there are two types of celebrity politics: those performed by politicians who will use forms and media typically associated with celebrities in order to enhance how they are perceived (such as photo ops or talk shows), and those performed by entertainers who voice their political opinions or support for a cause (Street 2004: 437-438). As Street himself states, the simplification in two broad categories is subject to criticism (Street 2012: 347). In this way, 't Hart and Tindall (2009) identify as categories celebrity advocates; celebrity endorsers; celebrity politicians; and the politician-turned-celebrity; these add far too much complexity to the issue of celebrity politics in Street's eyes. However, Marsh, 't Hart, and Tindall (2010) speak of a further 'politician celebrity' type, which 'reverses the flow between politics and celebrity' as

these politician celebrities are originally based in the political arena, yet instead of channelling other celebrities' influence and redirect it to their cause, as detailed in Street's first group, they instead 'brand' their leadership and ascribe to 'celebrity' by *celebritising* their personal image', or using media and consumer culture to their political advantage (Marsh et al. 2010: 325).

Celebrity politics can be considered an aspect of how politicians and political parties communicate with citizens: in a similar way to brands and celebrities, 'parties and politicians must communicate with, and appeal to, large groups of consumer-citizens on a symbolic and psychological, as well as rational level' (Davis 2010: 82). Therefore, a visible result of the celebritisation in the arena of politics is the increased presence of politicians' families 'and their qualities as parents and partners centre stage' (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 425). This notion is generally faced with criticism, especially of the fact that politicians must now take part in a 'political game of media performance', with their images, presentations and attitudes becoming increasingly more important towards the electoral cycle (Antkowiak and Scheffs 2015: 95). This is all part of a wider 'media spectacle' (Redmond 2010: 83), employed in political communication to add special significance to an event: the epitome of this is clearly exemplified by Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, putting forth basic concepts (such as "love" or "hope") as commodities to attract and appeal to an audience that can connect with them (Redmond 2010: 82-83). This argument provides political communication with a quality of entertainment, broadcast to the masses while bigger decisions are being made elsewhere. The commercialization argument is strong, especially considering the increased economic pressure that most traditional media are facing nowadays. There has not been much research on the topic of celebrity politics in Spain, but Quevedo-Redondo and Portalés Oliva (2017: 925) highlight a tendency towards *political fandom* in Spain: this is a persuasion strategy aiming for the voters' empathy by representing the political celebrities as close and human—just like any of them. In this way, the game of media performance is shown to also be present within Spanish politics, in this case through presidential candidates' Instagram profiles.

Additionally, it is important to consider the manner in which a candidate's gender may fit into this increased *celebritisation* of politics. As outlined earlier in this subsection, female celebrity is articulated through the conventions laid out by Hollywood and the media in general. In this sense, van Zoonen and Harmer (2011) argue that female politicians find it difficult to fit comfortably into the unfavourable space of changing celebrity discourse due to their age or body (van Zoonen and Harmer 2011: 94). McGregor, Lawrence and Cardona (2017: 267) suspect that, even if the trend of personalised politics may not be gendered overall, politicians' gender considerations will have an effect on the way they engage in personalizing communications. Since it is expected that women are more caring, compassionate and interested in social, educational, and environmental issues than men, Ross (2002: 131) suggests that women 'clearly see benefits in emphasizing precisely those particular policy agendas in their campaigning...'. Thus, it is not only their male counterparts or a hegemonic media system that may represent women politicians in a stereotypical light: they can also contribute significantly to the perpetuation of certain stereotypes 'connected to dominant myths about femininity' after being subjected to certain discourses that they have subsequently interiorised (Pušnik and Bulc 2001: 409).

### **3.4. Conclusion**

Across this literature review, several areas of scholarship that are relevant to my study have been considered. Firstly, feminism is a multifaceted epistemology, and this study will focus on critical feminist theory in particular because of its interest in power relations. Gender is also an important concept when dealing with the ways in which femininity is portrayed, as it is thought by many scholars to be a social construction, or performance. Age-based oppression was also taken into account because of the nature of study, revealing that older women suffer an additional layer of injustice due to their age.

As a whole, women's representation in politics focuses greatly on stereotypical emotional characteristics, and often draws on gendered tropes. These stereotypes are somewhat similar even across different countries. Women and men in the political arena seem to be perceived differently, and women in particular may "toughen" their stance to



resemble that of men in order to ensure greater electoral success. As a way of achieving greater electoral success, a more personalised and less party-based way of doing politics is being increasingly favoured by politicians and the media alike.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1 Research design

As stated in the introduction, the leading question this study is seeking to answer by means of the data presented below is the following: “In light of her age and gender, how was Manuela Carmena represented in Spanish newspapers before, during, and immediately after the 2015 municipal elections?” Thus, further subquestions I will be exploring include:

- How was she represented regarding her age?
- How was she represented regarding her gender (as a woman politician)?
- How was she represented regarding her experience and qualifications?

These questions aim to map out the way in which Carmena’s persona was constructed at an important time in her political career, from the constructivist point of view that the media produce a particular vision of reality.

The main purpose of the study is to trace and unpack the discourses through which Manuela Carmena was portrayed in Spanish press during a period of four months. The choice of a press-based sample stems from the fact that print media in general, and newspapers in particular, are particularly useful to analyse discourses and are generally easily available online. The sample focuses primarily on Manuela Carmena, although other politicians against which she is compared are mentioned occasionally with the purpose of situating her representation within the Spanish political realm. Manuela Carmena was chosen as the focus of this case-study due to her non-traditional career, which began well after her retirement as a judge, as well as her position as an aged woman in a position of political power. The methods used will be a triangulation of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Combining these methods of analysis allows each of them to fill in the other’s shortcomings: the goal of content analysis is to produce ‘a big picture’ and, as such, it is not as appropriate for studying deeper questions dealing with texts and discourses— it

cannot '[expose] aesthetic or rhetorical nuances within texts' (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, and Murdock 2007: 119). On the other hand, discourse analysis is a method that is much better suited to unpacking these nuances, which in turn requires that the corpus is much more limited. Combined, these methods of analysis provide more meaningful insights as to how Carmena's representation is articulated across the data sample.

This study makes sense of the world through a constructivist perspective. This approach assumes that 'meaning does not inhere *in* things', but is constructed as a result of 'a signifying practice' (Hall 1997: 24). The texts studied will be understood as sites where meaning is produced (McKee 2003). Epistemologically, I will look at the issues presented in my empirical material through feminist critical theory, based on the assumption that the manner in which we define situations 'plays a crucial role in directing attention to some things rather than others' (Deacon et al. 2007: 11). Therefore, looking at the world through a critical feminist theoretical lens will allow me to pay special attention to issues of gender stereotypes, unfairness and/or unequal power relations in the portrayal of women.

Power as a term plays a key role in this study. Power is 'about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures' (Wodak 2001: 11). Thus, the way in which power is constructed through language will underlie my analysis. Following a poststructuralist epistemology, feminist scholarship has shifted from considering power as something alien to language – with men as holders of power over it – to capturing the idea that language is indeed imbued with power: 'language not only reflects and perpetuates gender but language constitutes gender and produces sexism as a social reality' (Weatherall 2002: 5). When power imbalances and power itself become systemic social realities, it goes unquestioned as a 'taken-for-granted, self-evident truth or background assumptions of our everyday talk' (Holmes 2007: 32). Therefore, unpacking these imbalances and constructed social realities is of paramount importance.

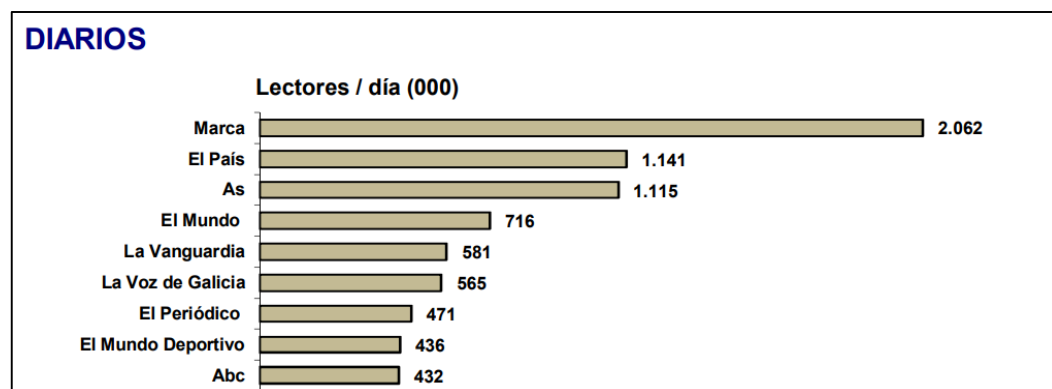
My thesis will be underpinned by the analytical concept of “representation”, understood as ‘the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language’ (Hall 1997: 17). There are two understandings to this notion in the arena of women in politics: firstly, the presence of women in the field. This is also known as ‘the politics of “presence”’, and has its roots in dismantling the overbearing presence of ‘elite white men’ in Western democracies (Disch 2016: 794). Secondly, representation can also be understood as the way ‘women are pictured, both materially and metaphorically’, and how this affects ‘their political action, equal exercise of rights, and general empowerment’ (Disch 2016: 781). My paper will focus on the latter understanding, and the way women are portrayed in the media.

## 4.2 Data collection

### 4.2.1 Newspaper selection

The newspapers analysed were *El País* and *El Mundo*, the two most-read dailies in Spain if sports journals (*Marca*, *As*) are excluded (Asociación de Investigación de los Medios de Comunicación 2016). Spanish newspapers are overall known to be rather partisan, with their ideas running ‘fairly parallel with those in politics, that is, from broadly conservative to centrist-left social-democratic positions’ (van Dijk 2005: 36). In this way, *El Mundo* is a centre-right publication, and *El País* veers towards a more socio-democratic left (Pinilla García 2011: 198).

*Fig. 1. Daily newspapers: readers (thousands) per day (Asociación de Investigación de los Medios de Comunicación 2016)*



*El País* was founded shortly after General Francisco Franco's death; its first issue was published on 4 May, 1976, in the early stages of Spain's transitional period towards democracy. Currently, *El País* is owned by the Prisa group, a media group focused on Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking markets. When the PSOE came to power in the 1980s, Prisa became closely ideologically aligned with this party, since the owner of this media group was working as an advisor to then-president Felipe González (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 104). This view has persisted to this day. *El Mundo* was founded in 1989, and the first issue was published on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October of the same year. The paper appeared out of a will to influence Spanish society with 'a liberal and progressive ideology' (El Mundo, n.d.), positioning itself as an "opposition newspaper" while the PSOE was in power in the late 80s, and read mostly by Popular Party supporters (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 104-105). Both newspapers, however, have recently published op-ed pieces (Jiménez 2015, El País 2015) in favour of *Ciudadanos*, a centre-right party founded in 2006, meaning that despite their ideological leanings towards one side or the other of the political spectrum, these papers are ready to meet in the slightly conservative middle. These pieces were nevertheless chronologically published after the sample this study is concerned with, which will be established in the following section.

#### 4.2.2 Article selection

Using search engines native to both *El País*'s and *El Mundo*'s websites, the keyword "Carmena" was inputted. In order for the articles to be chosen for further analysis, Carmena's name had to be in the title and the article in question must not have been explicitly classified as an opinion piece. The rationale behind excluding opinion pieces is that they may be by default overtly partial, and the aim of the study is to provide an overview of the papers as entities and not individual journalists' opinion.

Both websites offered the option to sort articles by date, or by coincidence/relevance rate. The coincidence rate was calculated independently by each newspaper's search engine. Because the keyword "Carmena" produced thousands of results, I decided to utilise the coincidence percentage as a variable in order to select the most relevant articles, as opposed to sorting purely by date. Only the articles showing a coincidence

rate of 75% or higher were chosen for further analysis. This coincidence percentage also serves a justification for choosing some 3 articles that did not fit the criterion of featuring Carmena's name in the title, since their relevance was higher than this figure.

I worked with three distinct timeframes regarding Manuela Carmena's presence in municipal politics. The articles were therefore classified according to three main periods: Campaign Period (CP), Post-election (PE) and Post-investiture (PI):

- The timeframe for CP articles starts from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015, around the time when Manuela Carmena's candidacy was announced, and ends on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015, the day of the elections. After the elections, however, there was no clear majority, and it was only upon a pact with the PSOE that Carmena was able to begin her tenure as mayor of Madrid.
- Articles published between 24<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>th</sup> June, are part of PE articles. They constitute a separate timeframe because the electoral campaign was over but, without a clear majority, negotiations to present a viable candidate to be invested as mayor were still underway.
- The scope of the third timeframe, PI, runs between 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015, and mid-July 2015. The end of the third timeframe is different for each newspaper because, when the criteria specified above were applied, there were far more *El Mundo* articles. Therefore, while there are no *El Mundo* articles published after 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in the sample, the final article for *El País* was published on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015. This cut-off point was established in order to ensure roughly the same current affairs issues were being dealt with in both sets of articles, resulting in an uneven number of articles for each newspaper.

*Fig. 2. Articles chosen per newspaper*

	El País	El Mundo
Campaign Period (CP)	19	19
Post-Election Period (PE)	35	40
Post-Investiture Period (PI)	33	37
Total	87	96

### 4.3 Data analysis

#### 4.3.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

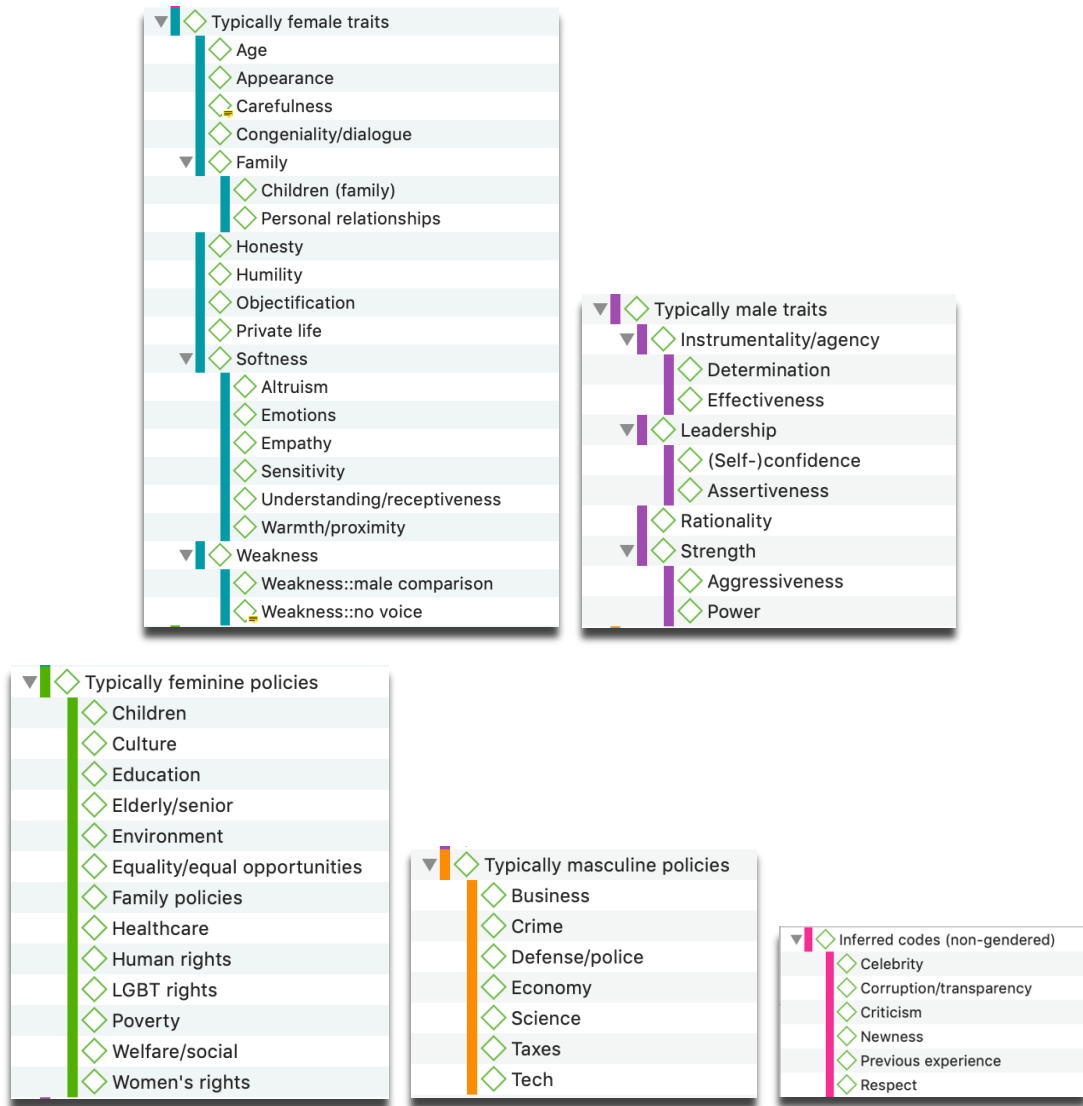
A Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) seeking to quantify repeated trends was applied to the chosen articles, followed by a more in-depth Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Initially, it seemed pertinent to choose the CDA articles randomly; however, bringing in a content analytical dimension allowed for an initial screening of the data through the coding frame, as well as a purposeful choice of articles to be analysed in depth through CDA. This ensured that the corpus was analysed in its entirety.

Content analysis does not have a concrete theoretical background underpinning it. Instead, content analysis ‘involves establishing categories and then counting the number of instances in which they are used in a text or image’ (Joffe and Yardley 2004: 56). As quantitative content analysis can become rather data-focused, the approach chosen for this research was Qualitative Content Analysis. QCA is a method ‘for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data’ by assigning the material to a coding frame (Schreier 2013: 170). The coding frame is consequently ‘at the heart of the method’ (Schreier 2013: 174), and it consists of the total set of categories used in the research (Joffe and Yardley 2004: 59). The categories in the coding frame are unidimensional, that is, focused on one aspect of the material, and any subcategories are mutually exclusive (Schreier 2013: 175).

My coding frame is informed by the existing literature about women in politics. Overall, the literature suggests that representational instances of women are plagued with ‘character-based stereotypes’, such as their ‘greater sensitivity and warmth’. In addition to character-based traits, the coding frame is built to elucidate whether the articles focus on typically male or female areas of politics when referring to Carmena’s proposed policies; these stereotypes assume that women are better prepared to ‘handl[e] education, health care, and poverty’ (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993: 140-141).

Even though the coding frame as a whole is deductive, reflecting the literature on the subject as stated above, there are six inductively-created categories, namely age and experience, which match the unique conditions of these particular elections.

*Fig. 3. Coding frame trees*



The structure of the code was based on Lee and Lim's study of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's campaign tweets (Lee and Lim 2016). This paper differentiated between feminine and masculine traits, and feminine and masculine policy issues. Typical "female" traits were those linked to being caring, compassionate, humble,



emotional or honest, whereas for male politicians these included being strong, determined, rational, confident, decisive, aggressive or assertive. On the other hand, typically feminine policies were those relating to children, education, healthcare, family, welfare or women and minority rights. Policies coded as being typically masculine were those focused on economy, business, military and defence, and science and technology. In my study, defence and the military were replaced by local police due to the smaller area of influence in municipal politics. They were nonetheless still coded as a typically masculine policy. The codes above were drafted based on overlapping findings across existing literature on female representation in the media, as well as gender stereotypes and the perception of female candidates (Lee and Lim 2016; Meeks 2012; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Herrnson , Lay, and Stokes 2003.)

First, a pilot coding phase was carried out in order to refine the initial coding frame. The selection of articles for this part of the study was randomised as follows: the 183 articles that composed the final corpus were numbered from 1 to 183. Out of the resulting list, the articles with a number ending in 1 were chosen for the initial study. The reason for this was for the pilot to include as wide a selection of the articles as possible, and ensure that the articles pertained to both newspapers and all timeframes. This resulted in a pilot of 21 articles, consisting of just over 10% of the total sample. Whenever a word or sentence referred to a gendered policy or trait as listed above, it was coded as a typically masculine or feminine issue and/or policy.

After these articles were analysed, every code referring to typically female or male traits that made zero appearances was first revised to ascertain whether a similar code was already present in the list. Those referring to typically feminine or masculine policies were left untouched, as they refer to wholly separated policy areas, with the exception of “Children and education”, which was broken down into two separate codes. Then, codes with low incidence rates were merged with others; to exemplify this process, “Caring” was eliminated to leave only “Altruism”, “Aggressive” replaced “Fighting”, and “Compassion” made way for “Sensitivity”.

New codes were added when the material to be coded seemed relevant but none of the existing codes were fitting. In this way, a new category was generated inductively as the pilot phase progressed. These codes were all joined under the umbrella of “Inferred non-gender-specific” codes, as they did not appear by themselves in the literature, nor did they refer exclusively to gender stereotypes. Instead, they are applicable to Carmena in particular or to her party ideology in general. Examples of this include “Previous experience”, to count the innumerable occasions in which Carmena’s previous employment was discussed, “Corruption/transparency”, which was especially popular due to the party’s ideology, as well as the pair “Criticism” and “Respect”.

After the first preliminary coding of the material with the finalised coding frame, all articles were reviewed and coded once again to ensure the validity of the results.

#### 4.3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

After screening the data with QCA, the other method employed in this thesis was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) seemed in principle like a good fit yet, after some consideration, I decided to employ CDA because of its language-heavy focus and its critical theory underpinnings. Indeed, CDA may also be considered a theory as much as it is a method (Fairclough 2004: 121). I felt most comfortable linguistically analysing the news stories as opposed to DTA’s more macro-textual and macro-contextual focus (Carpentier and De Cleen 2007). CDA focuses particularly on the relation between language and power; the research pertaining to this area seeks to consider ‘institutional, political, gender and media discourses ... which testify to more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict’ (Wodak 2001: 1-2). In this way, issues of language are inherently political; language can be used not only to represent where women fit in the narrative but also to challenge this disposition (Weatherall 2002: 2).

To be ‘critical’ is to have distance to the data, but also focus on self-reflection as scholars carrying out research; it is also embedding the data in the social and taking an explicit political stance (Wodak 2001: 9). In simple terms, discourse ‘defines and

produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked ... and reasoned about' (Hall 1997: 44). Discourses are not limited to language or written texts and can also include body language or visual image, as well as other forms of semiosis (Fairclough 2004: 205), that is, meaning-making.

As a method, CDA is appropriate for my analysis as it is concerned with systems of social meaning at an abstract level such as gender or age. Gender can be constructed as a system that shapes the way we understand the world, 'where sexist discourse is rife is in linguistic representations of women in the media' (Weatherall 2002: 76). CDA is interested in the expressions and manipulations of power made apparent through the use of linguistic forms. Because language and the social are inextricably combined, language and power are said to be intertwined in several ways:

Language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power. Power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term. (Wodak 2001: 11)

Media discourse is constructed and performative, that is, it produces a particular vision of reality (O'Keeffe 2012: 441). In turn, CDA is interested in investigating social inequality and its expression or reproduction through the use of language and discourse (Wodak 2001: 2; van Dijk 1993: 252). Therefore, CDA must provide an account of 'the role of language, language use, discourse or communicative events in the (re)production of dominance and inequality' (van Dijk 1993: 279) in order to be a sound analytical method. The goal, then, is to analyse not only the overarching themes dealt with in these texts, but also the underlying power structures. Power and dominance are usually systemic in that those pertaining to dominant groups and organizations have 'a special role in planning, decision-making and control over the relations and processes' through which power is exercised (van Dijk 1993: 255). I argue that the media is part of this hierarchy of power due to its wide reach and ability—or need—to construct specific narratives and 'generates ideologies through linguistic choices' (Srwimon and Zilli 2017: 142). In turn, feminist CDA takes a political perspective on gender, 'concerned

with demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power and ideology in discourse’ (Lazar 2007: 5).

When CDA is ‘rigid and well-structured’, bias can be minimised or even eliminated when interpreting the data collected, as well as allow for an easier extrapolation of claims, in this case regarding ‘how gender stereotypes in politics are reproduced and generated through language used in media’ (Sriwimon and Zilli 2017: 142). As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the CDA section of my analysis is based on the QCA in so as to aid in the structuring of the sample for data analysis. Concretely, those articles with the most instances of coding after the first round of QCA were chosen for analysis. In the case of *El Mundo*, all of the articles chosen had over ten instances of coding each. For the sample in *El País*, three articles with nine instances were also included in the sample due to their interesting content as seen in the prior screening of the data through QCA.

*Fig. 4. Number of articles per newspaper chosen for Critical Discourse Analysis*

	<i>El País</i>	<i>El Mundo</i>
Campaign Period	4	4
Post-Election	4	6
Post-Investiture	2	2
Total	10	12

The process followed to analyse these articles was identical. First, every article was read and relevant passages were highlighted and set aside. A relevant passage is defined as one that refers to Manuela Carmena or her policy decisions. Secondly, these passages were analysed by asking the following questions, which were defined with the aim of ‘standardising’ this qualitative research process and making it more thorough, as well as transparently showing the analytical process undertaken:

- What themes are these articles shedding light on? – these themes are inductively generated, and their relevance within the literature will be discussed in the next chapters
- How do the accompanying photographs or visuals play into the article text?
- How is this contributing to furthering relations of power or dominance?
- How do the discourses and findings relate to each other and fit into the research question? What information regarding Manuela Carmena is the reader being given?

#### **4.4 Validity and ethics**

It is complicated to show how qualitative research is valid, because often the reader relies solely on the researcher's description (Silverman 2000: 185) due to its subjective nature. Traditionally, validity refers to 'the accuracy of scientific findings' (LeCompte and Goetz 1982: 32). In the case of a qualitative method like CDA, the researcher's own views may come into play by highlighting, for instance, certain discourses instead of others. In order to ensure the validity of the study, initially, the sample was initially studied, and then a protocol of analysis was created, as Altheide and Schneider suggest (2013: 118). This protocol 'helps query the unit of analysis in an appropriate document' (Altheide and Schneider 2013: 20); in the case of discourse analysis, I clarified this by outlining the procedure through which I have analysed the texts, making my analytical thought process easier to follow.

Furthermore, triangulation is another of the approaches used to offset the subjectivity inherent to CDA. This refers to 'combining different ways of looking at [a situation]' in order to achieve a clearer outcome (Silverman 2000: 177): in this case, mapping the overarching trends with QCA, and then concentrating on a few articles using CDA in terms of having a closer look at the power relations at play. QCA also provides more ground for generalizable claims, as it is much easier to clearly show the reader exactly what procedures were used (Silverman 2000: 188) thanks to the provision of a coding frame, thus making this part of the analysis easily replicable. Following specific criteria such as political units, concrete periods of time, specific social and political actors,

discourses, and fields of political action (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 98, as cited in Sriwimon and Zilli 2017: 138-137) also aids in enhancing the validity of the analysis through CDA.

Issues including translation of the material may also potentially compromise the validity of the study. '[Competence in language] requires not only the syntactical mastery of sentence construction and combination but also mastery of the circumstances and settings in which particular forms of utterance and communication are appropriate' (Deacon et al. 2007: 153). Therefore, especially with idiomatic expressions, I will provide both a literal and an adapted translation, adding footnotes if necessary to clarify certain assumed meanings. These are also in Spanish for the sake of clarity. It is very important to be transparent in this regard, as especially discourse analysis has a very linguistic focus. As for the coding frame, it was first piloted and the whole dataset was analysed with it twice in order to improve its validity when answering the research question.

As for ethical issues, there is no conflict present in this study: although the analysis is based on a particular person's portrayal, all the data collected will be publicly available in newspaper archives.

## **Chapter 5: Analysis, Results, and Discussion**

This chapter will present an analysis of the dataset chosen through the criteria listed in the previous chapter. The findings corresponding to each method of analysis will be outlined separately in their respective sections.

### **5.1 QCA: Varied, yet gendered representation**

The first part of this analysis chapter aims to provide an overview of how the most commonly used tropes or stereotypes when representing politicians of different genders apply to Manuela Carmena's representation throughout the Spanish 2015 municipal elections. The section is divided into three parts: firstly, a general overview is presented in which the most frequent characteristics for each newspaper are laid out and subsequently unpacked. Secondly, the general focus continues, leaning towards the presence of typically masculine or feminine traits and policies, and the wider implications of this. Finally, a short section focusing on the insights gained from each newspaper is included, exploring the evolution of Carmena's representation across the Campaign, Pre-election, and Post-investiture timeframes.

### 5.1.1. Most frequent characteristics

*Fig. 5. Most frequent characteristics per newspaper*

<b>Trait</b>	<b>El Mundo</b>	<b>El País</b>	<b>Total</b>
Previous experience	90	49	139
Congeniality/dialogue	34	39	73
Welfare/social	40	29	69
Carefulness	23	33	56
Age	33	21	54
Humility	20	27	47
Warmth/proximity	18	24	42
Economy	13	26	39
Celebrity	21	17	38
Newness	13	24	37
Criticism	18	19	37
Respect	9	6	15

Both newspapers focus greatly on Carmena's previous work experience as a judge, with a total of 139 instances over both newspapers. She is repeatedly referred to as a judge even multiple times within the same articles. This is to be expected, considering her overall status as a newcomer. Nevertheless, this fact also ties in to wider implications that, while men seem to be inherently ready for political careers, women have to face questions regarding their competence, proving that their political careers are based on their own merit (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 66-67). *El Mundo* refers to Carmena as a judge or ex-judge almost twice as much compared to *El País*. Despite her retiring from the judiciary some five years before these articles were published, only 31 instances overall contain the prefix "ex-", indicating past employment. This means that, based on these texts, the Carmena's image is widely constructed by her profession as a judge, especially in *El Mundo*. Although the characteristic "Respect" was not one of the most frequent ones, it is interesting to note that, when it does appear, it co-occurs with "Previous experience" 6 out of 13 times. Therefore, roughly every second instance of respect is associated with Carmena's previous career. On the other hand, her role as



mayor (current or potential, depending on the time of each article's publication), does not appear to elicit the same comments of respect.

Carmena's newness is nevertheless paid attention to in its own right. At 24 instances, *El País* seems to emphasise this aspect almost twice as much as *El Mundo* does. While expected due to her status as a political newcomer, this emphasis on Carmena's newness can also challenge her competence as a politician (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 67) by questioning whether she is suited for the role. On the other hand, *El Mundo* pays more attention to Carmena's age, at just over 30 instances.

Welfare and social issues are discussed in *El Mundo* far more often than in *El País*. Citations coded under this characteristic refer almost in their entirety to evictions, both stopping them and providing alternative housing for those affected (EP 11.6.2015). This was an important topic for both Carmena and her political party, which may offer an explanation as to why it is such a prominent mention in the articles analysed. *El Mundo*'s choice to focus more on this aspect also from the banks' and policies' perspective may also have to do with their more right-leaning ideological position, opposed to *Podemos* and thus *Ahora Madrid*'s ideologies.

Due to the heavy dependence on stereotypes in their mediated representation, women are expected to be cautious as politicians (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 64; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993: 508). In relation to this, 56 mentions of Carmena's carefulness made it another of the most frequent characteristics in the dataset, appearing more often when her programme or actions come into play, and it occurred more often in *El País*. In this newspaper, the careful portrayal is two-sided: she is portrayed as willing to 'ask for further information' before making decisions (EP 26.6.2015), but, in a more negative light, this paper draws attention to the fact that she is not willing to commit to more than 'studying' certain proposals (EP 25.6.2015). Both newspapers represent her as unwilling to give her opinion on certain aspects (EM 3.6.2015, EM 31.5.2015a, EP 26.6.2015).

Indeed, there is some criticism towards Carmena, which is almost even between both newspapers, at just under 20 instances for each. For the purposes of this sample, “Respect” is considered the opposite of “Criticism”, as it showcases moments where Carmena is portrayed positively based on her actions or traits. When comparing both characteristics, there was over twice as much criticism overall: 37 total instances as opposed to 15 counts of praising, respectful citations. She is criticised for political reasons such as not following up on her electoral programme (EM 25.5.2015b, EP 16.6.2015), but also for personal reasons, such as being late for meetings or campaign rallies (EM 20.5.2015, EP 24.6.2015).

The category of celebrity presented just one more overall instance than “criticism”. In the sample, Carmena’s image is constructed as that of celebrity politician who is admired not only by her voters, but seemingly also by the constituents of Madrid as a whole.

It is worth noting that the most frequent characteristic, her previous work experience, is not inherently gender specific. However, the rest of the stereotype-based characteristics amongst the 11 most-used are all more typically linked to woman politicians, as they refer to her congeniality, cautiousness, or age. Another notable exception to this pattern are the 39 mentions regarding economic policies, usually perceived as more masculine, which are almost twice as prominent in *El País*. However, the economic policy issues mentioned often refer to welfare issues related to Carmen's negotiations with banks regarding forced evictions. In this way, the economic policy issues are linked to the more feminine policy area of welfare. Generally speaking, Carmena’s image is constructed through character-based traits in a much larger scale than through policy-based stereotypes. Out of the character-based traits, there is not a single characteristic that is typically associated to male politicians; Carmena’s representation is thus noticeably gendered.

### 5.1.2 How does Manuela Carmena's representation draw from typically gendered traits or policies?

*Fig. 6. 12 most frequent traits typically associated with women politicians per newspaper*

<b>Trait</b>	<b>El Mundo</b>	<b>El País</b>	<b>Total</b>
Congeniality/dialogue	34	39	73
Carefulness	23	33	56
Age	33	21	54
Humility	20	27	47
Warmth/proximity	18	24	42
Weakness	18	18	36
Understanding/receptiveness	23	11	34
Emotions	17	16	33
Empathy	18	13	31
Altruism	14	8	22
Objectification	14	3	17
Personal relationships	14	2	16

As mentioned in the previous subsection, Carmena's representation in print media during and after her campaign edges towards a focus on traits typically associated with women politicians. The most prominent one, which enjoys a high level of representation across both newspapers, is her congeniality and penchant for dialogue. This appears 73 times overall, and the split between both newspapers is, again, almost even. She is quoted as willing to collaborate closely with Cristina Cifuentes, who was then elected president of the Madrid Autonomous Community (EM 18.6.2015, EM 16.6.2015). *El Mundo* draws attention to her insistence that she leads not a party, but a group of people with 'a common interest' (EM 14.6.2015): she possesses, according to this newspaper, a 'characteristic conciliatory disposition'<sup>5</sup> (EM 12.6.2015).

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<sup>5</sup> *su característico talante conciliador*

Following this are the newspapers' construction of Carmena as a cautious politician, as well as an emphasis on her age. Both of these characteristics appear over 50 times, with *El Mundo* favouring the former, and *El País* focusing on the latter. As referred to in the previous subsection, these traits were also among the most frequent overall, and therefore not only popular within the subset of typical "woman politician" traits. Both newspapers also employ characteristics such as humility and warmth in a similar amount; both of these are emotion-based traits which are considered typical amongst women (Holtz-Bacha 2013).

Carmena is portrayed as being "Weak" 18 times in each newspaper. Weakness in this case refers to instances of representation where power is clearly taken away from Carmena despite her position of influence in the capital of Spain. For instance, 'good old Carmena<sup>6</sup>' had to sell some property to pay for personal debt brought upon by her husband's business crumbling (EM 22.6.2015), or she is described as 'giving into the ambush' that some journalists subjected her to on her first day as mayor of Madrid (EM 15.5.2015b).

It is also common to refer to women politicians by virtue of their family or relationships. *El Mundo* features this category 17 times, while in *El País* it is only mentioned twice. This marks a great difference in representation between the two newspapers, and it is in part because *El Mundo* ran a piece specifically focusing on the priest who married Carmena and her husband, as well as talking in greater detail about her family (EM 30.5.2015). Overall, *El Mundo* was more focused on Carmena's family than *El País*, which is in accordance with its more right-wing, traditional political leaning. This included her role not only as a wife, but also as a grandmother (EM 28.5.2015). *El Mundo*'s coverage also included a further 17 instances of objectification, such as references to her 'seducing' the voters (EM 15.5.2015a), while *El País* only represented Carmena in this light twice.

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<sup>6</sup> "la buena de Carmena"; literally "the good Carmena"; translated as *good old* due to its idiomatic nature

However, certain traits which, according to the literature examined, are generally present in the representation of female politicians, were not as evident in the sample. These include references to her physical appearance, which is a common issue amongst the representation of woman politicians (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross: 110; Lundell and Ekström 2008: 80.) Neither newspaper made great reference to this category in their coverage –five instances in *El Mundo* and only one in *El País*– but this is likely to be a country-specific trait, as the Spanish press has shown to be less interested in the appearance of woman politicians in the past (García-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 430).

*Fig. 7. Traits typically associated with men politicians per newspaper*

<b>Trait</b>	<b>El Mundo</b>	<b>El País</b>	<b>Total</b>
Assertiveness	16	17	33
Strength	7	12	19
Leadership	9	9	18
Determination	8	8	16
(Self-)confidence	8	7	15
Aggressiveness	5	8	13
Effectiveness	0	8	8
Rationality	4	4	8
Power	1	5	6
Instrumentality/agency	1	1	2

Although Carmena's image is mostly constructed through traits typically associated with female politicians, this is not to say that characteristics more stereotypically linked to male politicians are not present when describing Carmena: in this case, we can see some traditionally masculine aspects being incorporated to her gendered representation. These were on average equally prominent in both newspapers analysed. In fact, there were 33 instances across the sample linking to Carmena's assertiveness, with roughly half corresponding to each paper.

Her leadership, confidence and determination were prominent characteristics in the

articles analysed. These were quite evenly spread amongst both newspapers, with about the same amount of instances per each. Overall, however, the amount of times these characteristics were referred to is rather small, hovering around 8 times per characteristic per paper. Thus, Carmena's representation rarely hinges on traits typically associated with male politicians.

*Fig. 8. Policies typically associated with women politicians per newspaper*

<b>Policies</b>	<b>El Mundo</b>	<b>El País</b>	<b>Total</b>
Welfare/social	40	29	69
Children	12	12	24
Environment	7	14	21
Poverty	8	12	20
Culture	3	8	11
Equality/equal opportunities	3	7	10
Human rights	3	6	9
Women's rights	6	0	6
LGBT rights	3	1	4
Education	1	1	2
Elderly/senior	0	2	2
Family policies	0	2	2
Healthcare	0	1	1

The policies that Carmena is shown to be endorsing are almost entirely those typically identified as interesting to female politicians. Furthermore, the counts of these typically feminine policies correspond for the most part to a few concrete policies which were mentioned multiple times. Namely, welfare or social policies received special attention across the sample, with 69 instances, as Carmena was quoted expanding on her desire to reduce evictions and, where possible, provide alternative housing. As mentioned earlier, this was also in line with her party's ideology.

The second most popular policy topic, although only counting 24 instances, was related to children and often co-occurred with poverty; these included opening school cafeterias

over the summer to ensure that children up to the age of 18 in Madrid were not malnourished. Environment-related policies were also popular within the dataset. These were more varied, such as keeping the streets clean (EM 13.6.2015a, EM 23.3.2015; EP 3.7.2015) or reducing pollution levels (EM 28.5.2015, EM 26.5.2015). *El País* covered them twice as often than *El Mundo*. As mentioned in the literature review, social welfare, health, education and the environment are areas of politics which women politicians are expected to perform well in (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 63).

Overall, the focus is on a few types of policies, while roughly half of those identified by means of the literature review were not mentioned. As a senior citizen herself, Carmena was barely represented as a politician particularly interested in this demographic, focusing instead much more on children's wellbeing.

*Fig. 9. Policies typically associated with men politicians per newspaper*

Policy type	El Mundo	El País	Total
Economy	13	26	39
Defense/police	3	4	7
Crime	0	2	2
Business	3	0	3

While Carmena's representation was supplemented occasionally with some traits typically related to men politicians' behaviour, there were extremely few mentions of the policies male politicians are usually perceived as likely to excel in, such as science or security (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 63). The only exception to this was the category "Economy"; however, this code co-occurs frequently (in 14 out of 26 articles) with "Welfare/social" policies and is not generally present by itself. In the other cases, there is a focus is on generating employment and diminishing the unemployment rates especially among young people. The "Crime" and "Police" categories also co-occur with "Welfare/social" and refer to police presence at eviction sites. Therefore, the overarching policy topic refers to causes relating to welfare.

### 5.1.3 Evolution of Manuela Carmena's media representation between March and July 2015

This section will compare the five most-used characteristics per paper per timeframe, with the aim of mapping the evolution of Manuela Carmena's representation throughout the time scope this thesis is focusing on. Where there was a tie, all characteristics that appeared with the same frequency have been included.

*Fig. 10. Evolution of Carmena's representation in El Mundo*

CP	#	PE	#	PI	#
Previous experience	38	Previous experience	46	Welfare/social	20
Congeniality/dialogue	11	Age	22	Understanding/receptiveness	15
Emotions	8	Welfare/social	16	Carefulness	13
Newness	7	Congeniality/dialogue	13	Criticism	12
Strength	7	Celebrity	11	Empathy	11

Carmena's past as a judge is the most relevant aspect in *El Mundo*. Not only is it relevant during the Campaign Period, as would be expected due to her status as a newcomer, but it is even more so during the Post-Election Period. This means Carmena had already received thousands of votes, yet she was still being described on the basis of her past merits. Interestingly, her age, which was not in the top 5 traits of Campaign Period --although it trailed behind in sixth with only one less count than "Strength" -- received even more mentions during the Post-Election period, once she had real and tangible chances of becoming Madrid's next mayor. The only trait typically associated to men politicians is "Strength", which appears only during the first period. This is in part because she is portrayed as defending herself from her opponent's attacks in a direct manner: she 'announces [she will] file a complaint' (EM 12.5.2015) against those accusing her husband of underpaying his employees. However, this paper also showcases her agency by considering her 'the rival to beat' (EM 9.5.2015). These characteristics, which help to represent her as a strong, powerful woman do not carry



into the Post-Election period. The Post-Election period starts to show Carmena's status as a celebrity politician.

Nevertheless, the change in topics and traits covered is quite stark when compared to the Post-Investiture period, where they are replaced instead with "Criticism" and even "Carefulness". These instances are due to one of her councillors being under investigation [for old antisemitic tweets], as is the uptick in "Empathy". This all amounts to a somewhat negative representation of Carmena in the latter stages of the sample, as her councillor came under fire and she is not portrayed as responding with nearly as much strength as in the early stages of the campaign.

*Fig. 11. Evolution of Carmena's representation in El País*

CP	#	PE	#	PI	#
Previous experience	28	Congeniality/dialogue	13	Carefulness	29
Celebrity	10	Previous experience	13	Congeniality/dialogue	24
Age	8	Age	11	Weakness	15
Environment	8	Economy	11	Welfare/social	15
Humility	8	Humility	10	Criticism	13
Newness	7	Newness	10		
Warmth/proximity	7	Welfare/social	10		

In *El País*, similarly to *El Mundo*, Carmena is initially primarily identified through her work experience, as well as her age. In both newspapers, these factors are also very prominent well after the campaign and her electoral win. However, there is more instances of policy-based representation during the Campaign and Post-Election periods in *El País*, and these are reduced to only the fourth most important topic once Carmena is actually in power. *El País* also begins to contribute to the narrative of Carmena as a celebrity politician already during the Campaign Period, which is considerably earlier than *El Mundo*.

In the articles corresponding to the Post-Investiture period, there are 24 instances where Carmena continues to be constructed as a congenial politician. Policy-wise, this portrayal materialises through the will to instil ‘participative processes’, both with other stakeholders in a construction project (EP 25.6.2015) and with the citizens of Madrid through a survey on the cleanliness of the streets (EP 7.7.2015). These suggestions tie in with her focus on welfare-related policies, which appear some 15 times during this timeframe. However, there is a shift from Carmena’s humility and warmth, both present during CP and PE. Instead, during PI she is painted through a more critical lens over a dozen times, as well as a higher emphasis on her carefulness at 29 instances. Ultimately, she is portrayed in weaker terms during this timeframe, a weakness that is both political, questioning the effectiveness of her meetings with other officials (EP 25.6.2015), and that which stems from an examination of her physical condition (EP 18.6.2015).

#### 5.1.4 Conclusion

Manuela Carmena’s portrayal is shown to vary considerably across the sample, as no single trait is repeated in all three periods; instead, different aspects receive a stronger focus depending on the period chosen. The first period, Campaign Period, features Carmena entering into the political arena; she is warm and open to dialogue, her age and work experience are used to situate her within this context. In addition to this, some aspects of celebrity politics are already present. During the Post-Election period, Carmena is already a successful political actor and, as such, her time in the spotlight warrants a continued emphasis on celebrity politics. The Post-Investiture period, which takes place after she becomes Madrid’s new mayor through an electoral pact and not a majority vote, presents a more critical, weak and careful representation, which is still heavily gendered through the use of characteristics typically related to women politicians.

The most-used characteristics were fairly consistent across both newspapers and throughout the timeframes analysed, without clear differences in coverage that could be ascribed to the newspapers’ different ideological leanings. Instead, her representation is based on shared values amongst both newspapers, namely when referring to her

congeniality, age, and previous experience. *El Mundo* provides a bigger emphasis on Carmena's age. It is the only newspaper to use a typically male trait during any of the periods analysed, namely that of "Strength". *El País* paints her as weaker and focuses on her novelty well into the Post-Election period.

Even though the tropes and characteristics used were fairly similar across both newspapers, *El Mundo*'s right-leaning tendencies had an effect on the construction of Carmena's representation (van Dijk 2005: 36). Her family and personal relationships, for instance, were particularly important in this newspaper. These so-called traditional values are more typical of a right-leaning ideology such as *El Mundo*'s. However, despite being more closely aligned with Carmena's party in the political spectrum, she was still painted as weaker and more of a newcomer in *El País*. This newspaper, while leaning more towards the left (van Dijk 2005: 36) has traditionally supported the PSOE, which could also be considered as competition for *Ahora Madrid*, which is subsequently linked to *Podemos*. Therefore, the emphasis on her suitability for the role is likely to not only be based on women's presence as novelties in the political arena (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996: 114), but it is also likely to be affected by the ideological profile of the newspaper. Nevertheless, both newspapers focus more on Carmena's personal characteristics, such as work experience or age, instead of her way of doing politics. Carmena's representation is, thus, largely based on gendered stereotypes.

## **5.2 CDA: the discourses of experience, difference, and grandmotherhood**

As explained in the methodology chapter, the QCA served as the stepping stone to analyse a smaller corpus of articles more closely through CDA. This pre-selection had the goal of identifying those articles containing the most relevant and copious amount of content directly referring to Manuela Carmena, so they would be more fruitful for further analysis.

Firstly, I will present the discourses that emerged from the 22 articles analysed, paying attention not only to the emerging themes, but also to instances in which language can

be shown to further these discourses. In their respective subsections, I will consider how the discourses of experience, non-tradition, and grandmotherhood are furthered in these newspapers and across all time periods analysed. The themes making up these discourses will be outlined, as will the way in which they ascribe to power relations and Carmena's place within them. The pictures illustrating the dataset also received some consideration, as they participate in the semiotic process (Fairclough 2004) of constructing Manuela Carmena's image in the media together with the written word.

### 5.2.1 An experienced judge, but inexperienced politician

Carmena's experience emerges as one of the first underlying discourses across multiple articles in the sample. In the beginning, and as demonstrated in the QCA section of this analysis, Carmena is consistently referred to as a judge or ex-judge—her identity is thus constructed in great measure through her occupation prior to retirement. This brings forward a great deal of respect for 'her reputed and proved career' (EM 25.5.2015a) in *El Mundo*, and *El País* describes her as 'a woman with nearly half a century of experience fighting for social justice' (EP 10.3.2015). Both newspapers therefore participate in recognising Carmena's prowess in her previous job, which also works towards justifying the validity of her leading *Ahora Madrid*'s candidacy. As suggested in the previous subchapter, the newspapers in this case consider Carmena's suitability for the post based on her previous experience, something that women politicians often face when trying to establish themselves as viable candidates (García Blanco and Wahl Jorgensen 2012: 437). Due to the nature of the profession, judges are, in general, well-respected and considered to be educated. This characteristic therefore adds a layer of positive representation, used not only to situate Carmena as a newcomer to the political arena, but also aiding in describing her by means of her capabilities as an ex-judge, co-founder of NGO Judges for Democracy, or honorary Supreme Court judge, as well as praising her 'vast knowledge in law' (EM 13.6.2015b).

However, this more positive discourse is in tension with the colloquialisms she employs and which are cited directly by the newspapers in question, constructing an image of a candidate that, while authentic, may not necessarily be prepared to perform adequately

in the political arena. She is initially described as *Podemos*'s 'main bet' (EM 10.3.2015) to secure a win in the municipal elections, a choice of words that hints at her leading the campaign as more of a gamble to secure votes than a vote of confidence in her ability. Therefore, while being considered an experienced and successful judge, the underlying tone is considering whether she is adequate for the job as head of an emerging political formation.

In this way, her newness is often met with criticism, especially when mentioning potential ideas to carry out during her mandate: she is described as 'merely reflecting' (EP 10.3.2015) when listing these ideas, and an interviewer voices his apprehension by asking 'You want to do many things... What about the debt<sup>7</sup>?' (EP 13.5.2015). This question, presented by a male journalist, assumes a more powerful stance, which serves to invalidate Carmena's proposals and relay the fact that these are not to be taken seriously. When presenting some alternative ideas for non-lucrative social projects, these are undermined when she is quoted as stating 'let's see what happens' (EM 20.5.2015): *El País* chooses to close the article with this inconclusive remark that removes seriousness and power from her suggestions.

Further to this, an introduction to a feature dedicated to Carmena and her main opponent quotes Carmena as stating she is headed to buy a machine to make churros [typical Spanish pastry] after the interview, because she makes 'really good ones' (EM 28.5.2015). This publication is nevertheless placed in the lifestyle section of *El Mundo*, and the interview it precedes only contains a limited amount of policy-related questions. However, it still serves to situate her close to the private sphere in a gendered context (Pušnik and Bulc 2001: 401, Ross 2002: 79) by emphasising gender roles such as the assumptions linked to women and cooking. This therefore contributes to questioning whether women belong in the political arena (Sreberny and van Zoonen 2002: 2).

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<sup>7</sup> 'Quiere hacer muchas cosas... ¿qué pasa con la deuda?'

### 5.2.2 A different politician

Another perhaps unsurprising discourse is that of difference or non-tradition, which highlights both Manuela Carmena's position as a unique candidate, and her novelty in the Spanish political arena. Together with her unconventional party, they are considered a 'symbol of change' (EP 25.5.2015a). Carmena does things 'her way' (EM 23.3.2015), deviating from traditional forms: 'she promised instead of swore'<sup>8</sup> (EM 27.6.2015). This assists to construct her image as 'falling outside of the norm' in the same way as other women politicians (Garcia-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen 2012: 437). Carmena's tendency to do things her way is supplemented by a careful discourse in which she expresses her will to do things 'little by little' (EP 17.6.2015a), but she also does not ascribe to traditional ways of doing politics: she considers politicians to be at the constituents' service, and as such she asked town councillors to allow themselves to be addressed as *tú*<sup>9</sup> and she called them by their first names already during her first plenary session as mayor of Madrid. She is also reported as not giving a traditional inauguration speech in the Madrid Town Council. Her refusal to do so was reported as her 'shun[ning]' a typical speech (EP 13.6.2015); this loaded and powerful word clearly sets Carmena apart from the usual ways of doing politics. *El País* notes that her first public act as mayor differed from 'previous editions' as she did not 'take attendance' of the police officers (EP 24.6.2015). Continuing on this theme, she is benchmarked against other politicians, such as two previous mayors of Madrid. The case that receives most attention is her comparison against the incumbent mayor, Ana Botella. A piece dedicated to 'find[ing] the five differences' (EM 27.6.2015) was published by *El Mundo* at the beginning of Carmena's tenure. Leading from the title ('Ana Botella vs Manuela Carmena'), the article works towards convincing the reader that Carmena is doing things differently from her predecessor.

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<sup>8</sup> '*prometió en vez de jurar*'. In Spanish, 'to swear' (*jurar*) denotes more seriousness and has religious connotations.

<sup>9</sup> informal 2nd person singular ("you") in Spanish, not generally used in formal contexts, where the more formal "usted" is favoured

Not only is Carmena's behaviour as a politician portrayed as different, but she is also shown to be unique in her personal life as well. A profile published in *El País* details how she used to work in a marmalade factory in England, she is a cyclist, and she invents games (EP 25.5.2015b). The discourse of difference is in this case operating in a more positive fashion; the characteristics listed also hinge on her private life as they craft Carmena's identity and establish her as someone who is different from more "typical" politicians. However, a reason she is different is just how normal she is: she turned her biography into a 'normal person's CV' (EP 2.6.2015). The discourse of difference is nevertheless not without negative undertones within the sample. *El Mundo*'s mention of 'her *hipster* shop' in the Madrid district of Malasaña (EM 31.5.2015c) is rather loaded due to the rather negative connotations that the word "hipster" carries.

Again touching on Carmena's personal life to establish this atypical discourse, *El Mundo* reports that when Carmena and her husband got married, the couple's 'secular intentions' meant that they did so 'in the name of humanity instead of God' as civil marriages were a near-unthinkable fact during Franco's dictatorship (EM 30.5.2015). *El Mundo*'s account of this event therefore helps to portray Carmena as a non-conformist, non-traditional woman who is not afraid of stepping outside the box. However, the tone remains negative, as exemplified by the expression 'secular intentions', which suggests that Carmena is not only just acting differently to the norm, but also deviating from the commitment to the Catholic religion expected during those times. Even though Carmena is indeed a different politician to the norm, as a woman politician it is not unusual that novelty labels (Meeks 2012) are being used to describe her: her mere presence as a woman in the political arena preconizes the discourse of difference latent within these articles.

While celebrity politics was not as popular as other themes across the sample, it appeared clearly in certain instances, such as referring to her success as 'the Carmena effect' (EM 30.5.2015), as well as 'hundreds of fired up people' outside the town council when she was proclaimed mayor of Madrid (EP 13.6.2015). Through these instances, Carmena is constructed as a celebrity politician, with masses of people

supporting her, also tying in with the newness discourse mentioned above to provide grounds for her representation as an unusual politician. *El Mundo* also reports on citizens chanting “mayor, mayor!” prior to her speech on election night (EM 25.5.2015a), even when the outcome of the elections was still unclear. The convergence of her popularity and success in ‘real life’ with her media appearances assists in structurally ‘building’ (Van Zoonen 2006: 290) the concept of Carmena as a celebrity politician participating in the ‘political fandom’ (Quevedo-Redondo and Portales Olivá 2017) phenomenon. The most tangible portrayal of Carmena as a celebrity is present in the two articles reporting on the 2015 Madrid book fair, where she was promoting a book she had written prior to her nomination. Appearing in a book fair places Carmena in a celebrity *milieu*; not only is she promoting her book, she is a politician celebrity (Marsh et al. 2010) who is also actively promoting herself (Street 2011: 245), especially considering the way these newspapers then portray these events unfolding: she is ‘the star of the moment’, for her booth in the book fair saw long ‘queues of admirers and curious people’ as she is accompanied by a ‘trail of journalists (EM 31.5.2015b). She is described as ‘an illustrated muse’ (EP 17.5.2015) who is inspiring several artists’ artwork as a means of showing support for her campaign, some of which are projected onto Madrid buildings nightly (EP 21.5.2015).

In this way, she is described as being received like ‘a rock star’ (EM 20.6.2015, EP 22.5.2015a). Her political events have massive attendance (EP 1.6.2015, EP 22.5.2015b). In this case, the forces constructing her as a celebrity politician are her popularity, primarily, but also her personalised politics (Van Zoonen 2006: 289) as a so-called “headliner” of the events described. Her popularity is at such heights that she is welcomed by a ‘flood of reporters, photographers and curious people’ (EP 24.5.2015) when she goes to vote on Election Day. This shows Carmena as participating in the ‘political game of media performance’ described by Antkowiak and Scheffs (2015: 95) in the midst of the election period, albeit not necessarily willingly.



*Fig. 12. Carmena in the Madrid book fair (EP 2.6.2015)*



Despite having her back to the camera, the photograph illustrating Carmena's day at the Madrid Book Fair (EP 2.6.2015) depicts her by clearly positioning her as the subject despite being surrounded by a crowd of people, some of whom are taking pictures with their mobile phones, or trying to catch a glimpse of her. The setting also feeds into the overarching discourse of difference due to the unconventional setting at a book fair, but aside from a cordial handshake, not much closeness unto the attendees is displayed. There is also a barrier between Carmena and her impromptu audience, which physically separates the photograph into her versus the others. This serves to strengthen aspect of the celebrity politician.

The newspaper articles analysed take note of Carmena's position as an influential woman. In the context of being a non-traditional politician, she is portrayed as willing to 'renovate democracy' (EM 25.5.2015a) and 'changing the way politics is conceived' (EM 28.5.2015). Assertiveness is a typically masculine trait when stereotyping politicians (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 63), so portraying Carmena as holding this power over her decisions and her emotions is relevant, as it sets her apart from what is perceived as normal. She is 'not surprised or hurt by criticism' (EP 17.6.2015a), and her serenity is able to 'calm down the beasts' (EP 25.5.2015b), and after her law firm was struck by a terrorist attack (the Atocha killings in 1977) she 'did not let horror cloud her judgement' as she set out the next steps to protect survivors (EP 25.5.2015b). Further to this, she is shown to be hardworking and committed, and a leader through her efforts to meet with organisations or banks (EP 17.6.2015c; EP 29.5.2015). Carmena is represented as a

confident person in that she ‘sees herself’ as mayor well ahead of the decisive vote (EM 25.5.2015c, EP 25.5.2015c, EP 8.6.2015).

There are plenty of direct quotes, which immediately suggest Carmena’s voice is being respected and represented as directly as possible, without interference or judgment on the journalist’s part. Some of the articles are also accompanied by videos of the speeches quoted, namely the inauguration speech (EM 13.6.2015a, EP 13.6.2015), which is reported to deviate from tradition in its format and informal address of her fellow councillors. Providing Carmena with an almost unfiltered way of putting her fresh ideas forward, and the reader with an opportunity to contrast the quotes picked up by the newspaper and accept them as true. Her time as mayor is sometimes described as the ‘Carmena era’ (EM 16.6.2015); the sample only covers her first month in power, so framing her as fronting a new era named after herself is quite significant. This formulation is nevertheless only present in two articles, albeit one per newspaper.

### 5.2.3 A ‘grandma’ politician

We now turn to the most extensive discourse: namely, that of “grandmotherhood”, which this final section will unpack. It is articulated by the emergence of multiple themes, such as Carmena’s age, but it also touches on tropes traditionally associated with female politicians, as Carmena’s representation continues to be constructed in gendered terms.

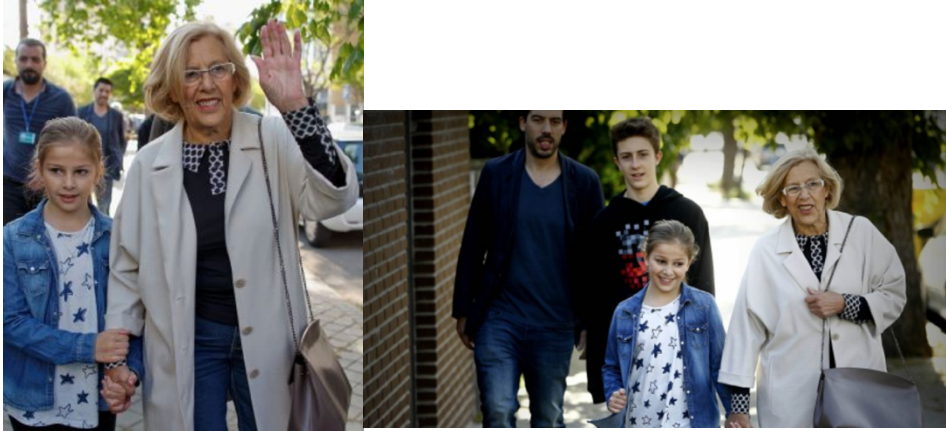
As initially outlined in the QCA section, age was a very relevant discourse in articles pertaining to both *El País* and *El Mundo*, making it one of the most important factors in terms of constructing Carmena’s identity. Her age is mostly referred in absolute terms, describing her as a 71-year-old, but it is also frequently constructed indirectly: she is ‘retired’ (EM 13.6.2015b; EM 31.5.2015c; EM 10.3.2015), an ‘analogical woman’ (EP 2.6.2015), and a ‘grandma’ a total of 11 instances across the sample, a term she uses to refer to herself and her fellow candidate Esperanza Aguirre, but which is also picked up by the newspapers themselves. This is exemplified for instance by *El Mundo* quoting

*Podemos*'s efforts to convince her to lead the candidacy as 'un-retiring a grandma' (EM 31.5.2015c).

In an article listing all of the main candidates in these elections, it is only Carmena's age that is explicitly mentioned. This immediately draws attention to the fact from the very beginning, even if other candidates in the Madrid municipal elections were also well over 60 (EM 15.5.2015a). The treatment of this discourse is thus interesting, for this narrative undermines Carmena's presentation as a progressive politician based on the type of policies she supports, as she is described as a woman that 'tiptoes' across social media, which the writer assumes must be maintained by her team members (EP 2.6.2015). This, in turn, takes part in negatively stereotyping of an older woman, which is known to be a running trope in the media (Pearsall 1997). Her physical condition is also examined, for instance, in the article titled 'Manuela's shoulders' (EP 18.6.2015). In this article, her tendonitis is linked to hard work, and although her fitness for office is not questioned, it is implied that it is the added weight of the new job which has been exacerbating this condition. A broken tendon also makes the news in *El Mundo* (EM 13.6.2015c). This weakness is also conveyed in political terms, as her meeting with a district president is criticised as 'more a courtesy [meeting] than effective' (EP 25.6.2015) and the controversies in her first days in office have 'shaken [her like a] hurricane' (EP 17.6.2015b).

Instead of as part of Carmena's identity, her age seems to be used as part of a larger political strategy: the politician who suggested her as a potential candidate to run as mayor is quoted as saying that the reason for this is that 'a grandmother is always respected by her grandchildren (EM 31.5.2015c). For instance, two *El País* articles feature a photograph of Carmena with a young girl, perhaps a family member. However, the girl's identity is not disclosed, which turns her into a prop or item in the eyes of the average reader. Neither woman is looking directly towards the camera in the photograph, which takes away some of their power as subjects, as we are invited to gaze at them. The age difference further enhances a softer, caring discourse of kindness, another stereotypical manner of representing aged women in the media (Pearsall 1997).

Fig. 13. Carmena goes to vote (EP 25.5.2015b, EP 24.5.2015)



In this way, the age theme also ties in with that of caring: speaking with *El País*, Carmena admits she could be a ‘carer’<sup>10</sup> mayor’ (EP 25.5.2015b), and she is also referred by *El Mundo* as ‘the Red Cross candidate’ (EM 20.5.2015), portraying her as an individual whose primary role is to provide help. There is even space for her advice to other women in spite of their lack of relevance regarding her political career: ‘[a separation of property (in marriage)] is something I advise every woman to do’ (EM 30.5.2015). Combined, the age and caring narratives craft a discourse of “grandmotherhood”: *El Mundo* describes Carmena as wanting to be the one to provide ‘shoes for a barefoot city’ (EM 13.6.2015b) that has been stricken by debt.

Pictures of Carmena as a young woman draw a wider rift between her present image and now. By introducing Carmena as the new mayor of Madrid with a black and white image of her as a young woman, the reader is once again reminded of her age, albeit passively.

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<sup>10</sup> ‘*seré una alcaldesa cuidadora*’; *cuidadora* in this context means “one who cares”. ‘Carer’ was chosen over ‘caring’ to better reflect the nuance of agency

*Fig. 14. Carmena as a young woman (EM 13.6.2015b)*



As mentioned in the QCA section, her physical appearance is not as prominent a theme as literature on women politicians would indicate. Her hair is mentioned ('it seems like she combs her hair with her hands' (EP 18.6.2015), referring to her lack of hairstyling), but not her clothes. This sets her apart, for instance, from representations of Hillary Clinton, also an aged woman in politics, whose pantsuits were oft-commented (Adamczyk 2016). Related to this is the discourse of objectification, not overly prominent and only really present in *El Mundo*, which likens her rise in popularity to a 'meteoric seduction' (EM 15.5.2015) and the picking apart of her mediated persona as a 'media striptease' (EM 30.5.2015). This objectifying discourse –especially the overt reference to a striptease-- draws on the male gaze, showing how 'women's bodies are commodified in mainstream society' (Ross and Sreberny 2000: 88; Ross 2002: 93). It can be argued that the lack of a more objectifying discourse ties in with the ageing body and its lack of desirability from the point of view of the media. In addition to this, "Manuela's shoulders", the article dealing with her physical condition in detail, does not even have a real photograph of her, but instead provides a caricature emphasising traits like her teeth or natural facial asymmetry (EP 18.6.2015).

*Fig. 15. Carmena's caricature (EP 18.6.2015)*



Another thematic difference with regard to the most common discourses outlined in the literature review is that Carmena's family, while referred to, is not a constant across her portrayal during the campaign at hand. This might have to do with Carmena's wish to lead a more private campaign, without showing her family as a strategy to gain votes (Romo 2015). In spite of this, Carmena's husband was frequently discussed as he came under fire for allegations made against him and his company. Her children and their occupations were also featured, as was an extended article describing Carmena's wedding and honeymoon in great detail (EM 30.5.2015). Therefore, in spite of Carmena overtly stating her wish not to include her family in her political campaign, *El Mundo* still included it as part of the construction of her image. This feeds into a key aspect of the celebrity politics mentioned in the previous section: Carmena's private life is merged with her political career (van Zoonen 2006: 299). Carmena's husband is also described as being on the verge of becoming the 'male first lady'<sup>11</sup> of the Madrid City Council (EM 30.5.2015). This statement positions him as a man taking a role traditionally occupied by women: meaning that Manuela Carmena is occupying a position so intrinsically associated with men that there is no adequate term with which

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<sup>11</sup> *primer damo*, a purposefully awkward masculinisation of the Spanish for first lady – *primera dama*.

to describe her husband. *El Mundo* is also making a deliberate choice to awkwardly masculinise the term “first lady” when there is no need to do so. Some of the questions in an interview published in this paper are also prying into her personal life: the interviewer wonders what Carmena’s grandchildren think about her running for mayor, as well as whether she acts as a grandmother and if she pampers them (EM 28.5.2015). This article is clearly geared towards the female readership in the newspaper, as it is published in the lifestyle section. Carmena’s main opponent, Esperanza Aguirre, is also asked the same question, which indicates that *El Mundo* is stereotypically framing these two older women politicians.

The discourse of grandmotherhood suggests a weaker position as a politician, by placing an emphasis on caring and proximity. In line with traditional literature describing woman politicians, the theme of emotions is rife within the articles analysed (Meeks 2012; Holtz-Bacha 2013; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Ross 2002.) Carmena tends to be portrayed as externalising these emotions: ‘it makes her sad; visibly bothered’ (EM 12.5.2015), or ‘she smiled in pain, she was happy and suffered’ (EP 18.6.2015). The reader is also offered direct quotes highlighting Carmena’s more emotional side ‘[the police cordons] have made me suffer a lot, it pained me<sup>12</sup>’ (EP 5.6.2015); or considering councillor Guillermo Zapata ‘may have a past he would like to apologise for’ (EM 13.6.2015b). Already in the earliest articles, those published at the beginning of the campaign, we are told Carmena ‘let herself be convinced’ (EP 10.3.2015) to run for mayor; this was not something she wanted or aspired to, but rather, a ‘step that took a lot of effort’ (EM 23.3.2015) and, ultimately, accepted the ‘institutional responsibility that came her way’ (EP 25.5.2015b). This, together with the discourse of a non-traditional politician who hates political rallies (EP 30.4.2015) and bureaucracy (EP 25.5.2015b), paints a picture that does not quite match the stereotypical qualities of a “good” politician, which are those associated more commonly with men (Meeks 2012: 181). During the campaign, an article that deserves special mention in terms of representing power is an article referring to the so-called

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<sup>12</sup> *me parecía doloroso*, literally “it appeared painful [to me]”, translated as “pained me” to reflect Carmena’s statement of how the police cordons affected her

“One Girl” operation carried out in order to ‘convince’ Carmena to run for mayor (EM 31.5.2015c). This extended coverage about the background of Carmena’s nomination is only present in *El Mundo*, and its critical interrogation of the fact is in line with its right-leaning ideology. The premise of this article is the idea that Carmena, while a respected and qualified professional, did not want to undertake this job—rather, it was a political party’s idea for her to spearhead a movement in hopes of garnering more voters. However, the article constructs her as a passive object who was not aware of others’—coincidentally other men—intentions to convince precisely her to run as mayor. Thus, even though there are refreshing instances of Carmena as an aged woman who is nevertheless capable of wielding great power, the discourse of weakness undermines them.

### 5.3 Conclusion: a gendered politician

Through a mixed-methods qualitative analysis of newspaper articles, this chapter explored in depth how Manuela Carmena was represented before, during, and shortly after the 2015 Spanish municipal elections. Despite her non-traditional status, Carmena’s representation follows traditional stereotypes of media representation of women politicians. Carmena’s representation is articulated by means of three overarching discourses: her experience, her novelty and atypicality, and grandmotherhood. All of these discourses draw from tropes with which women politicians are traditionally represented in the media.

An underlying struggle of power and weakness can be inferred, especially from the CDA, but it is already made apparent in the QCA section of the analysis. Some characteristics typically linked to men politicians are employed when constructing her figure, which shows gender becoming increasingly more diverse (Manning and Short-Thompson 2009: 261) when representing politicians. Both feminine and masculine traits are incorporated in the construction of Manuela Carmena’s gendered identity—at least regarding the way she is portrayed by the media. However, the vast majority of traits employed correspond to traditional representation of women politicians.



The newspapers' political leaning did not appear to be a defining issue influencing the coverage. While certain values were emphasised by specific newspapers, such as *El Mundo*'s greater focus on Carmena's family and husband, this was not enough to claim the political undertone of the newspapers analysed had a strong influence on the coverage presented. An explanation for this can be tied to the newness discourse, as well as *Ahora Madrid* as a party and their ideological links with *Podemos*, which set them aside from the papers' traditional ideologies and respective support for the PP and the PSOE.

## Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

### 6.1. Gendered construction of Manuela Carmena: the politics of grandmotherhood

In an increasingly aging world, where more and more women are entering political office (Fernández and Tous 2012: 24), analysing the intersection of aged women in politics is topical and necessary. Since there have been few studies focusing exclusively on the representation of women politicians in the Spanish context (Fernández García 2012: 565), this case study of Manuela Carmena's mediated representation aimed to fill in both of these gaps while exploring the themes and discourses underpinning it. In this way, this Master's Thesis critically interrogated how Manuela Carmena, the current mayor of Madrid, was represented in *El País* and *El Mundo* from the beginning of her campaign until her first weeks after taking power, from March to July 2015. The purpose of this research was to track Carmena's representation across this campaign period with the aim of elucidating whether her novelty and age would influence the construction of her image as a woman politician, or whether they would simply fall into the usual themes that have been highlighted time and time again by leading researchers in the field such as Ross (2002), Sreberny and Zoonen (2000), Huddy and Terkildsen (1993), or Kahn (1996), whose findings were discussed in depth in the literature review.

The QCA, performed with the goal of mapping the most common themes in Manuela Carmena's representation, showed a clear bias towards gendered forms of mediated representation. This method also served as a stepping stone to select 22 articles which were to be analysed in more depth using CDA. Using these two methods allowed for a triangulation of the data so as to provide more valid observations in spite of only using qualitative methods to analyse the dataset; the QCA section served to show how these themes were widespread across the dataset.

A key question this study sought to answer was how an aged woman in a position of power is represented, in light of both her gender and age. This representation was crafted through the construction of grandmotherhood, aided by plenty of mentions of Carmena's caring persona. In general, these instances of representation are either

neutral, merely stating her age, or leaning towards more loaded portrayals of aged women, such as the aforementioned ‘grandma’. Women politicians’ private lives are often constructed on the basis of their motherhood and families; it seems that this could also be the case for older women politicians. The discourse of grandmotherhood operates to draw attention to their status as older women, contributing and expanding on the discourse of motherhood that other younger women politicians are subjected to. As a point of comparison, older men in the same positions would hardly be constructed as grandfathers.

The media’s role as gatekeepers (Ross 2002: 123) dictates what is important and relevant, as this is how constituents acquire most of their relevant information when making a political decision. Choosing to focus on certain aspects, such as Carmena’s grandmother qualities, brings these issues to the fore. Additionally, from a constructivist perspective, there are clearly conscious decisions behind choosing what to represent and in what way. In line with the expectations, Carmena’s prior work experience and her age played a big but not determining role when constructing her identity. Rather, there were many gendered traits present across the sample, making Carmena’s representation quite overtly gendered as a whole. Furthermore, both newspapers furthered a stereotypical representation of her age. Though policies are mentioned in some capacity, the same social policies are constantly repeated, which are stereotypically associated with women politicians due to the assumed caring nature (Holtz-Bacha 2013: 63). In this way, while Carmena’s age was extremely topical across the sample, it served primarily to reinforce a gendered construction of her identity and policy interests in both newspapers.

From a critical feminist point of view, the way women politicians are portrayed furthers certain power relations, which this study sought to unpack. When Carmena is represented as an aged woman wielding a considerable amount of power, as well as carving her role in the municipal politics, positively overturns the traditional expected representation of women politicians. This brings the male-public/female-private dichotomy (Ross 2002: 163) closer together, constructing it in a less exclusionary fashion. Nevertheless, the discourses of atypicality and especially that of

grandmotherhood portrayed her in a weaker, more stereotypical way. This contributed to othering Carmena as a woman politician by virtue of her character traits and her personal relationships. In this way, this paper has highlighted a continuing male, patriarchal dominance in the mediated representation of politics, even when the politician at hand is out of the ordinary -- or in spite of this. Nevertheless, thanks to her newly-acquired position as a politician, Carmena already counts with a certain amount of power; she is granted with a voice which guarantees her a certain amount of visibility in the media – something that many other older women will never have (Edström 2018). Carmena's representation as a woman politician might be gendered, but it does provide an alternative to the way older women are usually represented in the media – sometimes even ignored (Lemish and Muhlbauer 2012: 167).

This study has confirmed the use of traditional gendered stereotypes applied to women politicians and their mediated representation when describing Manuela Carmena. It confirmed the gendered mediation thesis outlined by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross (1996): frames are being applied to a woman politician first and foremost by virtue of her gender. The traits and policy characteristics which were identified based on the literature dealing with the representation of women politicians were extremely widespread across the sample, meaning that Carmena's representation clearly followed the expected tone and presence of gender-role stereotypes (Ross 2002: 163). Additionally, Carmena's representation leans towards character-based traits instead of policies, which means that her personality is discussed more than her policy suggestions. However, there were some apparent differences with regard to previous studies, namely when constructing and representing the body of the woman politician. While Carmena's physical appearance is not excessively objectified, it is usually evoked with the goal of reinforcing the narrative of age. As a whole, the study differed from previous literature in some concrete instances. For instance, there is no clear focus on the female body, although this is not necessarily due to a particularly feminist understanding of political communication: Carmena's older body might also serve to explain this apparent non-desirability. Additionally, the Spanish press is not as heavily dependent on appearance when constructing women politicians, which serves to contextualise these findings within the Spanish context (García-Blanco and Wahl-

Jorgensen 2012). Nevertheless, while the discourse of grandmotherhood is othering Carmena by virtue of her gender, a few representations shine through where she is shown to be assertive and in control of her emotions. Her previous experience is also very highly respected. Therefore, while the underlying tone is rather oppressive, there is an ebb and flow of power relations. This points to a refreshingly multi-layered representation, which, while still heavily gendered, works towards constructing Carmena as a complex character that often retains her agency. While male characteristics such as assertiveness are used on occasion to ascribe power to Carmena, they work as double-edged swords which have the power of undermining and further othering her. The juxtaposition of some typically masculine traits such as leadership or confidence serves to question Carmena's suitability for politics: for instance, her confidence in 'seeing herself' (EM 25.5.2015c, EP 25.5.2015c, EP 8.6.2015) as the next mayor of Madrid before any pacts had officially been announced lends itself to a rather naïve portrayal of Carmena, which effectively "others" her: drawing attention to certain masculine traits further creates a rift that suggests women do not have a place in politics (Gidengil and Everitt 2003).

A very prominent topic in this thesis was the construction of Carmena as a celebrity politician, as the findings in the study also studied the presence of celebrity politics in the Spanish context, an angle that has received little attention. This aspect, while not necessarily employed as a means to express Carmena's gendered construction, continues to appear and plays a considerable part in the construction of her political identity. However, the way this trait is presented, providing a look at her private life, further complements the gendered component of her mediatic construction as a politician by continuing to place her in a nurturing, caring private sphere (Pušnic and Bulc 2001: 401). The aspects of celebrity outlined in the sample do not fit in with traditional Hollywood or pop culture celebrity conventions as outlined by van Zoonen (2006), nor do they hinge heavily on Carmena's personal life, including her family or partner as García-Blanco and Wahl-Jorgensen (2012: 425) would suggest. Instead of being overtly gendered, the prism of celebrity politics used to represent Manuela Carmena is situated within the context of change, drawing heavily from her normalcy (and atypicality as a politician).

This study also spoke to the traditional ideological differences found in Spanish press, in this case in the context of a political election. While the research on this matter focuses on the impact these ideological positions have on the coverage put forward by *El Mundo* and *El País* newspapers (Hallin and Mancini 2004; van Dijk 2005; Pinilla García 2011), this study found their coverage to be very similar overall. Admittedly, there were some aspects in which they clearly differed, such as the treatment of Carmena's family, which was discussed at length in *El Mundo*. Nevertheless, the main discourses, including that of grandmotherhood, ran fairly parallel amongst both newspapers. Carmena's ideological position does fall out of the more traditional interpretations of politics, which is why these two newspapers, which have been traditional supporters of the biparty system governing Spain since the Transition in the 1970s, may be othering Carmena by treating her as an outsider, or even a 'common enemy', as it were. In this case, further study of these newspapers' ideological position in a post-binary political arena would be needed.

## 6.2 Limitations and final remarks

Due to its qualitative nature and limited scope, this research has some limitations that need to be addressed. As touched upon in the methodology chapter, the use of qualitative methods of analysis lends itself to subjective interpretations of the data. By combining two methods with significantly different degrees of subjectivity, as well as extensively documenting the decisions taken, I sought to validate this analysis.

The sample size was reduced to a brief period of time; a study of how Carmena's representation evolved during the months after her election could offer greater insights and be less affected by her novelty in the political arena. Additionally, while dealing with important and repetitive stereotypes ascribed to women politicians, this research was only focused on a single politician, so it is hard to extrapolate the results to the representation of women politicians as a whole, even within Spanish politics.

Nevertheless, this thesis could provide a point of departure for studies focusing on aged women in the political realm. As such, future research could consider multiple woman politicians and the differences in their mediated political communication, or benchmark their mediated representation against old male politicians. This paper focused on external representations of Carmena, but comparing these with the way she or other aged women politicians portray themselves during their campaign could also prove fruitful. Finally, while the basis of this thesis was structured around unpacking the representation of a woman politician, it is worth mentioning that there should be a clear goal to rescind overt mentions of gender altogether when referring to the representation of political figures. Representing women politicians according to the same stereotypical tropes does not favour them: they will not be taken as seriously as men politicians, and this may deter other women from entering the political arena. In this sense, scholarship pointing out the inner workings of power relations operating at the level of gender oppression of female politicians is extremely useful, and it must continue unpacking the ways in which this oppression works. Only in this way can it be made apparent, constituting the first step towards any meaningful change.

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